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## THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

BY

ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER,
LORD WOODHOUSELEE.

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SECOND EDITION.

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# UNIVERSAL HISTORY,

FROM THE

## CREATION OF THE WORLD

TO THE

## BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.


BY THE LATE

HON. ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER,

LORD WOODHOUSELEE,

SENATOR OF THE COLLEGE OF JUSTICE, AND LORD COMMISSIONER OF JUSTICIARY IN SCOTLAND; AND FORMERLY PROFESSOR OF CIVIL HISTORY, AND GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITIES, IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.


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# UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

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ALEXANDER THE GREAT takes and destroys Thebes—Submission of the Grecian States—Alexander declared General of the Armies of Greece—Battle of the Granicus—Issus—Siege of Tyre—Expedition into Egypt—Battle of Arbela—Alexander at Persepolis—Expedition to India—Return to Susa—Enters Babylon, and dies—Division of his Empire—Kingdom of Egypt—of Syria.

ALEXANDER was in the twentieth year of his age, when he succeeded, by the death of Philip, to the throne of Macedonia. This prince, possessed of all the military abilities of his father, inherited a soul more truly noble, and an ambition yet more unbounded. He had from his infancy given proofs of that singular heroism of character, which marked the conqueror of the eastern world. To extraordinary endowments of nature he had joined all the advantages of education. Under the tutelage of the philosopher Aristotle, he imbibed not only a taste for learning and the sciences, but those excellent lessons of politics, in which that great teacher was qualified, beyond all his contemporaries, to instruct him.

On the first intelligence of the death of Philip,



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the Greeks, and particularly the citizens of Athens, exhibited that pitiful exultation, which only evinced their own pusillanimity. The Macedonian heir they regarded as a mere boy, from whom the liberties of Greece could never be in serious hazard; as he would, they conceived, find sufficient employment both for his policy and prowess in securing the stability of his hereditary throne against domestic faction. Lest, however, the example of Philip might encourage his son to similar schemes of ambition, the Athenians thought it a prudent measure to form an offensive and defensive league with several of the Grecian states against the new king of Macedonia, with the view of maintaining entire the national independence. Alexander beheld these measures in silence: the time was not yet come for the full display of that great plan of empire, which his comprehensive mind had formed. The Thracians, however, with the Pæonians and Illyrians, having made the death of Philip the signal of emancipation from the newly imposed yoke of Macedon, Alexander made the first essay of his arms against these barbarous nations, whose revolt he chastised with the most signal severity*.

The Greeks were speedily roused from their dream of security: but their surprise was extreme when they beheld the Macedonian pour down with his army upon Bœotia, and present himself at the gates of Thebes. The Thebans, on a false report of his death in battle against the Illyrians, had expelled the Macedonian garrison, and put to

* For ample details of this, and of all the subsequent campaigns of Alexander, see vol. iii. of the Family Library.

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death its commanders, Amyntas and Timolaus. Alexander offered pardon to the city on condition of absolute submission, and the delivering up of the principal offenders. The Thebans were obstinate, and the consequence was, that Thebes was taken by storm, and abandoned to the fury of the Macedonian troops, who plundered and destroyed it. Six thousand of the inhabitants were put to the sword, and thirty thousand sold to slavery. The priests, however, with their families, were treated with reverence; and while the streets and fortifications of the city were reduced to a mass of ruins, the conqueror showed his respect to the memory of Pindar, by preserving from destruction the great poet's house, which was still occupied by his descendants.

This exemplary severity struck terror throughout all Greece. The Athenians, elevated with the smallest glimpse of good fortune, were the first to show an abasement of spirit. They had received, after the fall of Thebes, a part of the fugitive citizens. For this act of humanity they now thought it necessary to apologise, by sending an embassy to Alexander, to deprecate his wrath, and to assure him of their sincere desire to maintain a friendly alliance. The Macedonian, contemning them the more for the meanness of this behaviour, made a peremptory demand that they should deliver up to him the persons of Demosthenes, Lycurgus, and six others of the principal demagogues, to whose seditious harangues he attributed the hostile spirit they had shown to all his measures. He did not, however, wish to push matters to extremity. The business was finally compromised



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by a public decree, by which the Athenians pledged themselves to institute a strict inquiry into the alleged ground of offence, and to inflict such punishment as the crimes, if proved, should merit.

The submission of Athens was followed by friendly embassies, and offers of peace and alliance from all the states of Greece. Alexander now summoned a general council of deputies, from all the several republics, to assemble at Corinth, with the purpose of deliberating on a measure which regarded their common interests and honour. Here he formally intimated to them his design of following out the great project of his father, the conquest of Persia. The design was flattering to the Greeks, who had ever regarded the Persians as an irreconcilable enemy, the object of hereditary hatred and jealousy; and in whose destruction they pleased themselves with the prospect of regaining the honourable ascendency they had once enjoyed above all the contemporary nations. Animated with this feeling, they received the proposal of Alexander with exultation: and already anticipating the triumphs to be gained under his banners, they hailed him commander-in-chief of the united armies of Greece.

The preparations commenced by Philip were continued by Alexander during the few months of winter that preceded the opening of this important campaign; but active as we may believe those preparations were, they bore no proportion to the magnitude of the enterprise. In fact, the chief prospect of its success arose, not from the strength of the invader, but from the weakness of the

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invaded empire. We have already remarked* the very defective system of government in this extensive monarchy, and the total want of all principle of union between the members of so vast a body. The people, over whom their governors or satraps tyrannised with the most absolute authority, were quite indifferent to any changes that might take place in the seat of empire. Thus we have seen an eunuch depose and put to death one monarch with all his descendants, and place another on the throne, without producing any other effects than might have followed in other kingdoms, upon a sovereign changing his first minister. The truth is, that the general peace of the empire had ever arisen out of its general weakness. The provinces had as little communication with each other as they had with the capital; and these separate and independent bodies had not even the slight bond of union which arises from a common religion. A despot of high spirit and a vigorous mind might have kept in order this discordant mass; but such was not the character of the present monarch. Darius Codomannus, who owed his elevation to the eunuch Bagoas, was a prince possessed of many amiable qualities—of a gentle and humane disposition; who might have swayed with honour a pacific sceptre, in a nation enjoying a good political constitution, and governed by wholesome laws; but he was neither qualified to fill the throne of Persia, nor to be the antagonist of Alexander.

This prince, who in all his enterprises never

* See Chapter II. of this book, toward the conclusion.

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indulged a doubt of his success, set out for Persia in the beginning of spring at the head of an army of thirty-five thousand men, and furnished with provisions only for a single month. He had committed to Antipater the government of Macedonia, in his absence. With this inconsiderable army, but excellently disciplined, and commanded by many brave and able officers, who had gained experience under the banner of his father Philip, he arrived in six days' march at the passage of the Hellespont, and crossed the narrow sea without opposition. While traversing Phrygia, he is reported to have visited the tomb of Achilles; and in an apostrophe to the shade of that great warrior is said to have expressed his envy of his happiness, who in life enjoyed the comfort of a faithful friend, and after his death had his name immortalised by the greatest of poets.

Darius, on the first intelligence of the advance of Alexander with this trifling force, resolved to crush at once this inconsiderate young man, and despatched immediately an army of a hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand horse, to the banks of the Granicus, a small river of Mysia, which discharges itself into the Propontis. This measure of the Persian monarch was contrary to the opinion of his ablest generals, who counselled him to follow a more protracted plan of warfare. They advised him to lay waste the provinces through which lay the course of the Macedonian army, and to limit all his attacks to a skirmishing warfare, merely with the view of harassing and wearing out the enemy by fatigue and want of provisions. This is said to have been the counsel of Memnon,

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Darius's ablest general; who proposed at the same time to conduct an army to Greece and Macedonia, to retaliate upon the invaders in their own territory. But when Darius compared his own force and resources with those of his antagonist, it wore with him the aspect of a mean and dastardly policy, to ruin some of the finest provinces of his empire in the hope of starving the army of his antagonist, instead of manfully encountering him in the field. The latter advice, of making a diversion in Macedonia, was more suitable to a manly spirit, and it was accordingly adopted.

Meantime, the Persians, under the command of the Satrap of Phrygia, were drawn up in formidable array upon the eastern bank of the Granicus to oppose the passage of the Greeks. The river is of inconsiderable breadth and depth, but of great rapidity. The Macedonians, therefore, with judicious precaution, entered the ford a great way higher than the place of the opposite shore on which they meant to land: and, crossing in an oblique direction, had the aid of the stream impelling forward their ranks, while its current gave a powerful obstruction to the enemy's entering the river and disputing with them the passage of the ford. Thus a large body of the Grecian army crossed the stream, with no other annoyance than what arose from the missile weapons of the Persians, and the spears that met the first ranks on gaining the opposite shore. No sooner, however, had these made good their ground, and by the spirit of their attack given full occupation to the opposing Persians, than the main body of the Grecian army passed without resistance. The

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contest was not long doubtful. The Persians are allowed to have fought with great courage; but such was the impression made by the determined resolution and intrepidity of the Greeks, while Alexander himself led them on against the thickest ranks of the enemy, that the Persian army was broken and put to flight, before the rear of the Grecian forces had passed the river. According to the account of Arrian, ten thousand of the Persian infantry and two thousand five hundred horse were slain in the battle of the Granicus. Among these were many officers of distinguished valour and ability. The loss of the Greeks amounted to the trifling number of eighty-five horsemen, and thirty infantry. These were next day buried with their arms, all in the same grave. The rich spoils of the Persian army Alexander sent home to Macedonia, to be presented to his mother, as the first fruits of his success; and to Athens he sent three hundred Persian shields with this message, that these were the trophies of a victory gained by *the Greeks* under *his command*, over their *ancient enemies*.

This first and important victory facilitated to Alexander the conquest of all the Lesser Asia. Sardis, the capital of the ancient Lydian kingdom, submitted without opposition, and Miletus and Halicarnassus, after a short but vigorous defence, opened their gates to the conqueror. Deriving a presage of continued victory from his first successes, Alexander now sent orders to his fleet to return to Macedonia, thus leaving to his little army one only alternative, that they must conquer or perish. Memnon, in the mean time, had sailed

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with a body of Persian troops to the coast of Greece. He began by an assault upon some of the islands. He made himself master of Chios, and of the greater part of Lesbos; and had laid siege to Mitylene, its chief city, whence he proposed to pass into Eubœa, and thence into Attica. This well concerted diversion might, in all probability, have checked the progress of Alexander in Asia. But the death of Memnon destroyed this promising scheme; and the armament returned without effect to the coast of Phœnicia.

Alexander pursuing his course through the Lesser Asia, it was the counsel of Darius's best officers, that he should await his approach in the plains of Assyria, where there might be ample space for bringing into action the whole of his immense force; but this advice was too mortifying to the pride of the monarch of Persia, who, though of mild and gentle manners, was a man of high spirit, and of great personal courage. He was impatient to check the presumption of Alexander, and, advancing to meet him, rashly entered the passes between the mountains of Cilicia, near the town of Issus; a situation where, from the nature of the ground, the greatest part of his army, if then attacked, could not possibly be brought to act with effect against the enemy. Alexander, though then weakened by disease—(the consequence of a fever caught by imprudently bathing, when overheated, in the river Cydnus)—no sooner received intelligence of the critical situation of the Persians in the defiles of a mountainous country, than he hastened with the utmost ardour to attack

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them. Arrian, Quintus Curtius, and Plutarch, have all given different statements of the number of the Persian army at the battle of Issus; but the lowest of these accounts makes the number amount to 400,000. The same historians have lavished all the powers of description in painting the splendour, riches, and magnificence of the military equipage of this immense host. That body of the Persians named the Immortals consisted of 10,000 chosen troops, who were clothed in robes of gold embroidery, adorned with precious stones, and wore about their necks massy collars of pure gold. The chariot of Darius was supported by statues of gold; and the beams, axle, and wheels, were studded with precious stones. Ten thousand horsemen followed the chariot with lances plated with silver. The mother and the wife of Darius had their separate chariots, attended by a numerous train of females on horseback; and the pageant was closed by a vast retinue of the wives of the Persian nobles and their children, guarded by some companies of foot lightly armed.

Darius, caught thus at unawares, in the mountains of Cilicia, with this immense but most inefficient force, was taught, in the battle of Issus, how little confidence is to be placed in numbers when matched against a few experienced and well-disciplined troops. The Persians were defeated with immense slaughter, their loss amounting, as is said, to 110,000 men, while that of the Macedonians, according to Diodorus and Quintus Curtius, was no more than 450. Darius himself displayed great personal courage. He fought from

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his chariot till his horses were wounded, and its course obstructed by the heaps of dead which covered the ground.

I cannot omit observing here, with regard to the history of Alexander written by Quintus Curtius, that, although it is one of the most elegant works that remain to us of the compositions of antiquity, its authority is not to be put on a par with that of Arrian or Diodorus. All accounts, indeed, of the exploits of Alexander must wear an air of the marvellous; for many even of those facts which we know to be strictly true are in themselves prodigious. This consideration, which has rendered Diodorus and Arrian the more cautious in admitting nothing into their narratives but what rested on the strictest historical evidence, has served with Curtius only as a temptation and licence for amplification and embellishment. Yet it must be owned that some of those embellishments are in themselves so pleasing, that we can scarcely wish them to have been spared. Such, among others, is that admirable and strongly characteristic oration which Curtius puts into the mouth of the Scythian chief, addressing himself to Alexander: such is that beautiful scene which Curtius describes to have passed in the tent of Darius after the battle of Issus; theerror of Sisygambis, the queen-mother, who addressed herself to Hephæstion, mistaking him for Alexander; the fine saying on that occasion of Alexander, *Non errâsti, mater, nam et hic Alexander est;* circumstances, indeed, which Arrian likewise relates, though not with the assurance of their perfect authenticity. There is, says he, such a dignity

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in the expression, that if we cannot rest on the story as a certainty, we ought at least to wish it to be true. To the honour of Alexander, it must be owned, that generosity was a strong ingredient in his nature; and that the humane affections, though at times overpowered, and apparently extinguished in the heat of passion, certainly formed a part of his genuine character. To the mother, and to the kindred of Darius, he behaved with the respect and kindness of a son and of a brother, a conduct which made a deep impression on the mind of that generous and ill fated prince.

Darius, with a few scattered remains of his army, had made a precipitate retreat during the night, and, taking his course eastward, crossed the Euphrates at Thapsacus. His empty war-chariot and cloak falling into the hands of the Macedonians gave rise to a report of his death, which threw his queen and the captive princesses into agonies of despair. But Alexander hastened to undeceive them, and calmed their agitated minds by repeated assurances of his clemency and protection. He received, a few days after the battle, a deputation from Darius, conceived, as he thought, in a strain of pride unsuitable to the present circumstances of that prince. The Persian demanded that his wife and the captive princesses should be immediately restored on payment of a ransom; and declared his resolution to bring into the field an army that should fully repair his late disasters. Alexander replied, that when his antagonist should think proper to throw himself on the mercy of his conqueror, he would then convince him that he needed no bribe to incite him to an act of humanity.

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The consequence of the battle of Issus was the submission of all Syria. The city of Damascus, where Darius had deposited a large part of the royal treasures, was betrayed by its governor and given up to Parmenio, who found in it above 300 of Darius's concubines, and many of the officers of the king's household. The Phœnicians had suffered much oppression under the Persian yoke, and were thus glad to be emancipated from its tyranny. Strato, the king or governor of Sidon, attempted in vain to maintain his province in its allegiance; he was deposed, and Alexander having allowed his favourite Hephæstion to dispose of the crown, he conferred it on Abdalonymus, a man of great worth and virtue, and of illustrious and even royal descent; but whom misfortunes had reduced to seek a subsistence by manual labour.

Alexander had hitherto borne his good fortune with singular and becoming moderation. Happy, says Curtius, had this moderation attended him through life; but prosperity had not yet corrupted his ingenuous mind. *Felix, si hâc continentiâ ad ultimum vitæ perseverare potuisset; sed nondum Fortuna se animo ejus infuderat.*

He now directed his course towards Tyre; and desired to be admitted into the city to perform a solemn sacrifice to Hercules. The Tyrians sent him a golden crown, as a token of their respect and amity, but refused his request; declaring their purpose of observing a neutral conduct, and maintaining their liberty, while the fate of the Persian empire was in dependence. This city was of importance to Alexander, as a strongly fortified station, which gave him free access to the sea

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from all the neighbouring coast. His pride, too, was piqued, and he determined to make himself master of the place at whatever cost. The city was situated on a small island, about half a mile from the main land. It was fortified by a wall of immense strength, and of 150 feet in height, leaving no space between its base and the sea which surrounded it on every side. It was, therefore, unassailable from the quarter of the land, unless by filling up the intermediate distance by a mole or pier, extending from the shore to the foot of the walls. This operation, the more difficult that the water was of considerable depth, was resolutely undertaken by the Macedonians. The labour and the fatigue attendant on its execution were incredible, for they had to do with an enemy, whose spirit and resolution were equal to their own, and who possessed every advantage that the strength and height of their fortifications, as well as a numerous armament of galleys, could give them for annoying the assailants. The works were destroyed almost as soon as reared; nor could the Macedonians ever have succeeded in their enterprise, had they not collected from all the neighbouring sea ports now under their control, a naval force to beat off the Tyrian galleys, and thus protect the operations of the besieging army. By incredible perseverance, the mole was at length completed in the seventh month of the siege; the engines of the Greeks assailed the walls on one side, while the ships of war made a vigorous attack on one of the piers of the city in the opposite quarter. A large breach was at length effected, and the Macedonians entered the city,

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putting all to the sword who opposed them. The detail of this siege by Arrian is one of the most interesting narratives which the writings of the ancients have preserved to us.

Alexander, incensed at the opposition he had met with, and the losses his army had sustained, forgot his usual clemency. He ordered the city to be burnt to the ground; 8000 of the inhabitants had been put to the sword, in the final assault and entry of the Macedonians; of the prisoners taken with arms in their hands, 2000 were crucified, and the rest, to the amount of 30,000, sold as slaves. The conduct of Alexander was yet more inhuman on the taking of Gaza, which immediately followed the capture and demolition of Tyre*. That city was deemed impregnable, from its elevated situation on the summit of a steep hill,

* It is proper here to mention, that Josephus is the only writer who relates an extraordinary scene between Alexander and the high-priest of the Jews. This historian informs us, that, after the taking of Tyre, the conqueror pursued his course to Jerusalem, which had incurred his resentment from the refusal to furnish supplies to his army during the siege of Tyre. Jaddua, the high priest of the Jews, arrayed in his pontifical vestments, went forth to meet him in solemn procession. The king, as is said, no sooner beheld this venerable figure, who wore a mitre inscribed on the front with the sacred name of Jehovah, than he prostrated himself at his feet. His courtiers expressing their surprise and even offence at this, which they deemed a degrading conduct in their sovereign, "Do not wonder," said he, "at what you now see; this same venerable man appeared to me at Dium in Macedonia, and assured me that the God whom he served would give me the sovereignty of the Persian empire." It is a sufficient confutation of this story to remark that neither Arrian nor any other of the professed historians of Alexander makes the smallest mention of it. See *L'Examen Critique des Histoires d'Alexandre.*

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and from the great strength of its fortifications. It was yet better defended by its garrison, and the intrepidity of its commander, Betis, who resolved to resist the invaders to the last extremity. The military engines employed against Tyre were now planted against the fortifications of Gaza. In a sally from the town, the besieged set fire to the works of the Greeks, and in a desperate conflict, attended with great slaughter on both sides, Alexander himself was dangerously wounded in the shoulder by a heavy dart thrown from a catapult. At length, after repeated assaults, the city was taken by storm, and its brave inhabitants perished almost to a man. The governor, Betis, whose noble defence of his country was worthy of the applause even of an enemy, was dragged round the walls of the city at the wheels of Alexander's chariot. "The King," says Curtius, "gloried that, in this instance, he imitated the example of his progenitor Achilles, in the vengeance he took on the dead body of Hector."

Darius had sent a second embassy to Alexander while he was engaged in the siege of Tyre. The Persian now assumed a humbler tone. He offered ten thousand talents for the ransom of his mother and his queen, and he agreed to give Alexander his daughter Statira in marriage, with all the Asiatic provinces to the westward of the Euphrates for her portion. When these terms were made known to the Macedonian officers, Parmenio could not help remarking, that, were he Alexander, he would not hesitate a moment to accept of them; "And I," replied the king, "might think so too, were I Parmenio.

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The views of Alexander were now directed to the conquest of Egypt. In a council of war which he held after the taking of Tyre, he laid open to his officers the plan of policy which directed his measures, both in the making himself master of the whole coast of Phœnicia and of Egypt—measures which appear at first sight to be deviations from his principal object, the reduction of the Persian empire. He wisely judged that the main obstacle to the accomplishment of this end was the naval force of the Persians and the command they had both of the Phœnician and Egyptian seacoasts, along with the isle of Cyprus, whence they could at all times, from a variety of quarters, make attacks upon Greece and Macedonia. Of the allegiance of the Greeks Alexander had no assurance. The Spartans were openly hostile to his sovereignty. In these circumstances, it was obviously his wisest plan to secure, in the first place, the dominion of the sea; when this was once attained, the conquest of Persia, already half achieved, appeared an object which might be accomplished with ease.

In prosecution of these views, Alexander, after leaving a strong garrison in Gaza, directed his course to Egypt. The whole country submitted without opposition. At Memphis, he made a solemn sacrifice to the Egyptian gods, acknowledging their affinity to the deities of Greece; a stroke of wise policy, which had a great effect in conciliating the allegiance of the people to their new sovereign. In the same views he planned and founded a great city at the mouth of the Nile, to which he gave his own name; a situation so



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happily chosen, and with such advantages of nature, that within the space of twenty years Alexandria rose to great wealth and consequence, and has ever since maintained its rank among the first commercial sea-ports both in ancient and in modern times. Above twenty other cities bearing the name of Alexandria were reared in the course of Alexander's various expeditions. It is such works as these which justly entitle the Macedonian to the epithet of *Great*. By the cities which he built, by rearing in the midst of deserts those nurseries of population and of industry, he repaired the waste and havoc of his conquests. Without those monuments of his real glory, posterity might have agreed in bestowing on him an epithet synonimous to that by which he is yet known among the bramins of India—*the mighty Murderer*.

The next enterprise of Alexander, although it has furnished opposite constructions, was probably the fruit of the same extended policy which regulated all the designs of this extraordinary man. In a beautiful and fertile spot in the interior of Libya, surrounded on all sides by immense deserts, stood the temple of Jupiter Ammon, whose oracle had the same authority and fame among the African and Asiatic nations that the temple of Delphos enjoyed in Greece. Alexander had always encouraged a popular superstitious belief, which he found eminently subservient to his schemes of ambition, that he owed his own birth to an intrigue of Jupiter with his mother Olympias. The wiser part of his subjects, no doubt, treated this fiction with the ridicule it deserved; but it seemed

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an object of moment to give it force and credit with the multitude, and in particular with the barbarous nations against whom his enterprises were directed. Nothing seemed so proper to this end as the voice of the Libyan oracle, the testimony of Jupiter himself, acknowledging the king for his genuine offspring. The difficulties of the enterprise, in conducting a great army through an hundred leagues of sandy desert, weighed nothing in the scale with such an object. He secretly procured every necessary information regarding his route, and even employed guides without the knowledge of his army, that he might appear solely conducted by the aid of heaven to the meritorious and pious object of his journey. Two dragons, according to Ptolemy, or two ravens, as Aristobulus related, were the sole directors of his course. The oracle was prudently instructed and prepared for his reception, and the enterprise (of course) ended to his wish, in a direct and solemn acknowledgment of his heavenly descent.

Returning from his African expedition, Alexander now traversed Assyria, and, passing the Tigris and Euphrates without opposition, came up with the Persian monarch at the head of 700,000 men, near to the village of Arbela. Before assembling this immense army, Darius had again earnestly solicited for peace. He offered to Alexander, along with his daughter, a still greater cession of territory and the sum of 10,000 talents: but the ambition of the Macedonian was unbounded, and he rejected all terms but those of implicit submission. The Macedonian army did not exceed 40,000 men. It was towards the close



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of day when they came in sight of the prodigious host of the Persians, which extended over an immense plain to the utmost distance that the eye could reach. Even some of Alexander's bravest officers were appalled with this sight, and Parmenio counselled him, as his wisest plan, to attack them in the night, when the inequality of numbers might be the less seen and felt on both sides. But Alexander, with more sagacity, conjectured that the Persians would prepare themselves against such an attack, and that it was a better policy to wait till the day-break, when they would find their enemy exhausted with the fatigue of watching the night under arms, while his own troops, with proper attention to their necessary refreshment, would encounter them with vigour and alacrity.

The issue corresponded with this sagacious foresight. The attack was made at day-break with an ardour and impetuosity on the part of the Greeks, which, in the first onset, threw the foremost ranks of the Persian army back in confusion upon the main body, and completely restrained and rendered ineffectual its operations. Disorder, once begun, was propagated like an electrical shock through the whole mass, and the decisive victory at Arbela was purchased even with less effort than had attended the contest at Issus, or that on the banks of the Granicus. The numbers of the Persians that fell at Arbela are estimated by Arrian at 300,000, while the loss of the Macedonians did not exceed 1200.

Darius now fled from province to province, while the whole country submitted to the conqueror. In this situation, the ill-fated monarch, a fugitive,

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abandoned by his troops and closely pursued by Alexander, was finally betrayed by Bessus, one of his own satraps. He dismissed a body of Greeks who were his guards, and who, from personal attachment, followed him through all his disasters, lest the preference shown to foreign soldiers might offend his native subjects. In this deserted situation, he was surprised and assassinated by Bessus. Polystratus, a Macedonian, received his last words, which were an expression of gratitude to Alexander for the humane treatment he had bestowed on his mother, his wife, and his children. There is a chasm in the narrative of Quintus Curtius at that passage which relates the death of Darius, and it has been supplied by some one of his editors upon the authority of Plutarch. The inserted passage is singularly beautiful, and altogether worthy of the pen of an ancient classic. It informs us that Polystratus having gone aside to a fountain to quench his thirst, saw hard by a mean wagon, in which lay a wounded man, to appearance in the agonies of death. There was no attendant near. On approaching, he perceived that it was the king of the Persians, who lay stretched upon a skin, covered with wounds. When Polystratus came near, he opened his eyes, and feebly asked of him a draught of water, which when he had received, "Whoever thou art (said he) who hast done me this office of humanity, it is the last of my misfortunes that I can offer thee no return. But Alexander will requite thee for it; and may the gods reward him for that generous compassion, which, though an enemy, he has shown to me and to my unfortunate kindred. Take (said he) this hand as the pledge of

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my gratitude." So saying, he grasped the hand of Polystratus, and immediately expired*. Such was the end of Darius Codomannus: *Quid hujus conditione inconstantius aut mutabilius, qui nuper inter felices felicissimus, mox inter miseros miserrimus!* Of this prince it may be truly said, that he merited a better fate. The tender and humane affections formed a strong ingredient in his nature. When we consider him stripped of his dominions, his crown and life sacrificed to the insatiable ambition of an unprovoked invader—to forgive was much; but an emotion of gratitude to that enemy, expressed with his latest breath, indicated a generosity of soul which is scarcely to be paralleled.

Alexander was now master of the Persian empire. He passed from Babylon to Susa, and thence to Persepolis. But the immense riches, of which his army now made their spoil, corrupted and relaxed the military discipline. The Macedonians assumed the Asiatic manners; and Alexander himself gave way without restraint to every species of debauchery and intemperance. In the madness of intoxication, he set fire to the royal palace of Persepolis, at the instigation of the courtezan Thais, who boasted that a woman had better avenged the injuries the Persians had done the Greeks than all their generals. Daily instances of the most unbounded vanity, and even of cruelty and ingratitude, disgraced the conqueror of the East. Without those fresh supplies of troops which from time to time arrived from Macedonia, the shameful corruption of manners which pervaded his army could not have failed to animate even those dissolute and

* Q. Curtius, in fine, lib. v. c. 13.

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indolent Asiatics to a recovery of their freedom by exterminating their invaders.

But ambition, the most powerful antidote against the contagion of luxury, was the darling passion of Alexander. Amidst all the enervating pleasures of Persepolis, the Macedonian was meditating new enterprises and more extensive conquests. The son of Jupiter could do nothing less than follow the footsteps of his brothers Hercules and Bacchus. He now projected the conquest of India, firmly persuaded that the gods had decreed him the sovereignty of the whole habitable world. The fame of his victories had preceded him in his course, and he penetrated without much opposition to the banks of the Indus, receiving in his progress the submission of most of the native princes, who deprecated his hostility, and sought to gain his favour by large subsidies and presents. One of these, however, named Porus, a prince of great spirit and magnanimity, disdained to submit to the invader, and maintained a contest for his independence which did equal honour to his personal courage and conduct as a general. Porus encountered the Macedonians with a large and well-disciplined army; but the event was unsuccessful, and in a decisive engagement on the banks of the Hydaspes, the Indians were defeated with the loss of 20,000 foot and 3000 horse. The captive prince being brought into the presence of his conqueror, Alexander generously praised him for the courage and ability he had displayed, and concluded by asking him in what manner he wished and expected to be treated. "As a king," said Porus. Struck with the magnanimity of this

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answer, Alexander declared he should not be frustrated of his wishes; for from that moment he should regard him as a sovereign prince, and think himself honoured by his friendship and alliance. As a proof of his amity, he added to the kingdom of Porus some of the adjoining provinces from which he had expelled the princes who had been his ancient enemies.

The Macedonian, as the monuments of his Indian conquests, built two large cities, to one of which he gave the name of Nicæa, and to the other of Bucephalia; the latter in honour of his famous horse Bucephalus, who died there. He now advanced into the interior of India, passing the rivers Hyphasis and Acesine, eastern branches of the Indus; and his accustomed good fortune constantly attending him, he would have pursued his course to the Eastern ocean, had the spirits of his army kept pace with his ambition. But those barbarous nations, though unable to resist his progress, were not subdued. It was impossible to retain the territory he had overrun; and his troops, foreseeing no end to their labours, positively refused to proceed. With a sensible mortification to his pride, he was forced to return to the Indus, after rearing, as monuments of his conquests, twelve altars upon the eastern banks of the Hyphasis, of enormous height, on which he inscribed his own name, with those of his father Ammon and his brothers Hercules and Apollo. He is said also to have traced a camp in the same place of three times the necessary extent, surrounding it with a strong rampart and fosse: and to have built in it enormous stables for horses, with the

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mangers of a most extraordinary height. He is, in like manner, said to have caused suits of armour to be buried in the earth of size far exceeding the human proportions, with bedsteads, and all other utensils on a similar gigantic scale; follies which would, indeed, exceed all belief, did they not rest on the authority of authors whose testimony appears hardly liable to suspicion.

Alexander now determined to turn his disappointment to the best avail by exploring the countries washed by the Indus in its course to the ocean. In this view a numerous armament of ships was partly built and partly collected on the different branches of that great river, and the command of it given to Nearchus, a native of Crete, a man of talents and genius, in whom Alexander found an able and enterprising coadjutor. On board of this fleet the king himself embarked, with a large part of his troops, while the rest followed by land along the course of the river; the fleet and army thus aiding each other's progress. In this expedition, which was of several months' duration, the Greeks encountered considerable opposition from the warlike tribes of Indians through whose territories they forced their way.

Having at length reached the ocean, at the sight of which Alexander is reported to have shed tears, as finding here an impassable limit to his conquests, he directed Nearchus to proceed along the Indian shore to the Persian Gulf, while he determined to march with the army towards Persepolis and Babylon, through the desert plains of Gedrosia, and the more cultivated country of Cara-

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mania. Both plans were accomplished. Nearchus, after a voyage of seven months, arrived in the Euphrates, while Alexander, within the same time, amidst incredible fatigues and perils, and with the loss of three-fourths of his army, reached the frontier of Persia. On his arrival at Susa, where he was received with the honours due to the sovereign of the empire and the conqueror of the eastern world, he married Statira, the daughter of Darius, and at the same time celebrated the nuptials of eighty of his chief officers with a like number of Persian ladies of distinguished rank, on each of whom he bestowed a suitable dowry. The public joy on occasion of these splendid festivals was increased by the arrival of Nearchus at Susa, the report of his successful expedition, and the detail of those discoveries which were the fruit of his voyage*.

We have hitherto contemplated the character of Alexander chiefly in a favourable point of view.

* The journal of Nearchus's voyage, preserved to us by Arrian, and found in his book upon Indian affairs, from the twentieth to the forty-first chapter inclusively, is a most instructive and curious document. It has been translated and illustrated by an ample and learned commentary by Dr. Vincent. The accounts which we find in Arrian and in Strabo, of the state of manners and the condition of society in India at the time of Alexander's expedition, correspond with surprising accuracy to the present condition and manners of the native Hindoos. The singular division of the whole mass of the people into *castes*, distinguished by their occupations and modes of life, and separated from each other by impassable barriers, prevailed at that early period as at present; and the progress of science and knowledge in many of the useful and elegant arts gave every presumptive evidence of a state of civilisation extending to the most remote antiquity.

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It must not, however, be disguised that this character, ingenuous upon the whole, and worthy of admiration, was stained and deformed by extraordinary vices and defects. Of his inordinate vanity we have already seen some striking proofs. Of his sanguinary disposition we have likewise had examples in the barbarous treatment of some of his vanquished enemies; but it remains to be told that, in the unbridled rage and frenzy of his passions, he was guilty of the most shocking cruelty, combined with ingratitude to some of his best friends. Philotas, a worthy favourite of Alexander, the only remaining son of his oldest and ablest general Parmenio, had received some vague information of a treasonable design against the life of Alexander, but delayed to mention it, probably from giving no credit to the informer. On the report reaching his ears from a different quarter, Alexander, who was told at the same time that Philotas had been informed of the design and refused to communicate it, immediately conceived the unworthy suspicion that his silence arose from his own concern in the conspiracy. On no other grounds Philotas was put to the torture, and, in the agony of pain, uttering something that bore the appearance of confessing his offence, which was nothing more than a venial piece of negligence, he was, by the command of Alexander, stoned to death. But this was not enough. The aged Parmenio, whom the king concluded to be either an accomplice in the crime of his son, or at least to be incapable of ever forgiving his punishment, was, by the same command, assassinated in his tent. Clitus, a general of great

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ability, and to whom Alexander owed his life in the battle of the Granicus, stood deservedly, on these accounts, in high favour and esteem with his sovereign, who particularly prized the ingenuous simplicity of his manners, and the honest freedom with which he was accustomed to utter his opinions or propose his counsels. Amidst the mirth of a banquet, while the sycophant courtiers, in extolling to the skies the achievements of their prince, were drawing a depreciating comparison between the merits of Philip and of his son, this brave Macedonian had, with honest indignation, reproved their meanness, and warmly supported the fame of his ancient master. Alexander, in a transport of rage, seized a javelin from one of the guards, and hurling it at the breast of Clitus, struck him dead upon the spot. The atrocity of the deed was instantly felt by the king, and, in the agony of remorse, he would have turned the weapon against his own bosom, had not the attendants forcibly prevented him. What can we think of the infamous servility of the attendant courtiers, who, to compose the troubled spirits of their sovereign, could pass a solemn decree that the murder of Clitus was a justifiable action?

Yet, with the most wonderful inconsistency of character, the same man whose vanity and arrogance could prompt to such outrageous and criminal excesses, appears to have been possessed of a moderation of mind that utterly disdained the gross flatteries with which his courtiers continually strove to corrupt him. While sailing down the Hydaspes, Aristobulus, a mean sycophant, who had composed a narration of the king's battles, was

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reading to him for his amusement the account of the Indian expedition, in which the writer had exaggerated in many circumstances palpably beyond the truth. Alexander seized the book, and threw it with indignation into the river, telling the author that he merited the same treatment, for having absurdly endeavoured to magnify by fiction those deeds which needed no embellishment to attract the admiration of mankind.

Arrived at Ecbatana, Alexander celebrated his entry into the ancient capital of Media with magnificent games and festivals, in which every refinement of luxury was contrived that could flatter the senses or feed the voluptuous passions. Whole days and nights were consumed in riot and debauchery, in which the meanest soldier vied with his prince in the most unrestrained indulgence. Amidst these tumultuous pleasures, the death of Hephæstion, whom Alexander loved with sincere affection, threw him into a paroxysm of despair. He commanded the physicians who attended him to be put to death; he accused the gods as conspiring with them to deprive him of a life more dear to him than his own; he ordered a public mourning, and that the sacred fires should be extinguished through all Asia; an omen wh ich both his friends and enemies regarded as of the blackest import.

The Chaldean priests of Babylon had appropriated to their own use the riches and revenue of the temple of Belus, which was the ornament of that city, and a great object of superstitious veneration. Alexander had expressed a purpose of reforming this abuse, and the Chaldeans, to avert

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his design, had published a prediction that his entry into Babylon would be fatal to the conqueror of the East. Alexander probably saw through this artifice and despised it. He entered Babylon in triumph, and was so delighted with the splendour of that great city, that he declared his purpose of making it the capital of his empire. He there received ambassadors from various regions of the earth, congratulating him on his conquests, and soliciting his friendship and alliance; but mark the force of superstition, even in the greatest minds. The Chaldean prophecy, in spite of reason, depressed his spirits to such a degree as to force him to drown reflection by every species of riot and debauchery. The consequence was an inflammatory fever, which, after a few days' continuance, put an end to his life, in the thirty-third year of his age.

It is not easy to form to ourselves a precise and just idea of the character of Alexander the Great. While some authors have attributed to him the most extensive as well as the soundest plans of policy, there are others who have rated him no higher than as a fortunate madman. Truth is generally to be found between opposite extremes. We cannot, consistently with reason, say, with M. Montesquieu, that that general trusted nothing to chance who, with an army of only thirty-five thousand men, the sum of seventy talents, and a single month's provisions, set out upon the conquest of Asia. Neither can we, with the same author, ascribe it to a sagacious policy that he assumed the Persian garb, imitated the manners of that people, affected all the ostentatious splendour of

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an Asiatic monarch, and corrupted the simple and virtuous habits of his Macedonian troops by every excess of luxury and debauchery. But if we cannot, in these particulars, join in the encomium bestowed on the profound policy of Alexander, much less can we subscribe to the opinion of the French satirist, that the youth who, at the age of twenty-four, had, in three battles, won the empire of Persia; who was master of Greece, of Asia, and of Egypt; and who, in the course of a few years, built more cities than any other conqueror is recorded to have destroyed, merited no other treatment than to be confined as a madman*. A judgment of this kind may be allowed to pass in a satire of Boileau, but has no weight in the balance of sober reflection. Guided by a spirit of just criticism in the perusal of the history of this great man, of which we have here exhibited some general outlines, we shall discern the characteristics of a singular genius taking its direction from unbounded ambition: an excellent and ingenuous nature corrupted at length by an unvarying current of success; and a shocking example of the violence of the passions, when eminence of fortune removes all restraint, or flattery stimulates to their uncontrolled indulgence.

The extent of the views of Alexander, and the reach of his genius, may be estimated from those *five* schemes which he had entered in his table-book as enterprises which he still purposed to accomplish for establishing and securing the em-

* Heureux, si de son tems pour des bonnes raisons,
La Macédoine eut eu des petites maisons.
BOILEAU.

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pire he had founded. These were, 1. That 1000 ships of war should be built in Phœnicia and Cyprus, for the conquest of the Carthaginian empire, and of all the states on the African and European coasts of the Mediterranean sea. 2. That a high road should be made from Egypt along the African coast to the Pillars of Hercules, and garrisons and cities built along it at convenient stations:—a facility of communication between the distant parts of an empire so extended, he judged to be absolutely essential to its preservation. 3. That six magnificent temples should be built in various parts of the empire, to promote an amicable consonance in the great principles of religion, and reliance on the divine government; without which, as a fundamental persuasion, independent of all the various modes of worship, no empire can long exist or flourish. 4. That seaports, harbours, and arsenals, should be constructed in every convenient situation, for the reception and security of the fleets. 5. That all the new cities he had founded should be planted with colonies, and interchanges made by transporting the Asiatics into Europe and Africa, the Europeans and Africans into Asia. This, which tended to the union and consolidation of all the different parts of his empire, was the main end and centre of all the projects of this extraordinary man. His object, in short, was *universal empire*. Whether that object was practicable or attainable need not be inquired; it was so in his opinion, and all his designs and measures tended to that end. This object is the key to his whole conduct, and reconciles every apparent anomaly of his cha-

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character: it accounts for his desire to be held of divine origin, while his mind had no tincture of credulity; for his gentle and conciliating manners opposed to the arrogance of his temper, impatient of control or opposition; for his generosity, clemency, and munificence; for his frantic resentment of every thing that tended to mortify his pride; for the assumption of the Eastern dress, and imitation of the Eastern manners, and the studied abolition of all distinctions between his native subjects, and the nations whom he subdued.

Alexander on his death-bed had appointed no successor, but had given his ring to Perdiccas, one of his officers, and his principal favourite after the death of Hephæstion. When his courtiers asked him to whom he wished the empire to devolve upon his death, he replied *To the most worthy;* and he is said to have added, that he foresaw this bequest would prepare for him very extraordinary funeral rites. He left by Barsine, the widow of Memnon of Rhodes, a son named Hercules; he had a brother, Aridæus, a weak prince, whom he carried along with him in his expeditions; and his Queen Roxana, the daughter of Oxyartes, a Bactrian, was with child at his death. By Statira, the daughter of Darius Codomannus, he had no children, nor by Parisatis the daughter of Ochus. His principal officers having held a council upon his death, it was agreed that the crown should be conferred on Aridæus, who took the name of Philip; and it was resolved that the child of Roxana, if a son, should share the empire with him. She was soon after delivered of a son, who was named



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Alexander, and whose right was accordingly acknowledged.

This settlement of the empire jointly upon a weak man and an infant was the result of the jealousy of the principal officers, who could not agree upon the choice of any one of themselves, while each thought he had an equal claim with his competitors. Those of the most moderate ambition would have been contented with the sovereignty of some of the provinces; while others aimed at an undivided empire. Among the latter was Perdiccas, who from the circumstance of receiving the ring of Alexander was considered as tutor of the princes, and as such had a share of the regency; but this ambitious man interpreted the king's gift as a designation of him for his successor.

His policy was singular; he brought about a division of the whole empire into thirty-three different governments, among the chief officers of Alexander; men of very different measure of abilities, and who, he foresaw, would be for ever at variance. His aid must, therefore, probably be courted, and he proposed by an artful management to weaken all, and thus reduce them by degrees under his own authority. In this division of the empire, the original monarchy of Macedon, with all the provinces gained by Philip, together with Greece, were allotted to Antipater and Craterus. Paphlagonia and Cappadocia were assigned to Eumenes; Egypt to Ptolemy; and to Antigonus, Phrygia, Lycia, and Pamphylia. Lysimachus had Thrace with the adjacent countries upon the

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Euxine. To Perdiccas himself, no distinct share of the empire was assigned in government; he contented himself with his influence in the regency and the command of the household troops.

On the history of the successors of Alexander, the Abbé Condillac has made a very just reflection: "We are interested," says he, "in the revolutions of the Grecian states; our admiration is excited by the conquests of Alexander; but we can scarcely fix our attention on the history of his successors. Yet a vast theatre is opened to our view—a variety of scenes and multiplied catastrophes. How then does it happen that the history of those transactions is less interesting than the fate of Lacedæmon? It is not the magnitude of an object that renders it truly interesting. A large picture is often displeasing from the very circumstance of its greatness. We lose the connexion of its parts, because the eye cannot take them in at once. Still less will a large picture give us pleasure, if every portion of it presents a different scene or action, each unconnected with the other." Such is the case with the history of the successors of Alexander. The multitude of subordinate governors who share and dismember this vast empire, every one of whom we behold pursuing separate schemes of ambition, throws a confusion upon the whole picture, which it requires the most laborious attention to dissipate; and even when that is accomplished, at the expense of much fatigue and trouble, the end to be gained, either in instruction or pleasure, is not adequate to the cost. In the revolutions of Greece, our views are continually fixed upon the most striking and interesting



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objects; the development of the human mind, in its advances from rudeness to refinement; the progress of government and legislation; the gradual changes of national manners; the exercise of the noblest passions, the love of country and of ingenuous freedom; the display of eminent virtues and great abilities. But in this motley and confused drama of the dismembered empire of Alexander, there is neither a people nor a country for whom our interest is excited: there is neither a display of talents nor of virtues. At the head of the empire we behold two sovereigns, the one a fool, the other an infant; an unprincipled and ambitious regent with no defined or legal authority; a multitude of inferior governors, each aiming at an extension of his own power by the overthrow of his rivals; and, finally, the consequence of their contentions and intrigues, in the extinction of all the family and kindred of Alexander.

There is, however, one exception to these barbarous and disgusting scenes. Among the numerous governors, Ptolemy, surnamed Soter, a Macedonian of mean extraction, had Egypt, as we have remarked, for his share of the empire. He owed his elevation to his merit, and had served as a general, under Alexander, from the commencement of the Persian war. While he aimed at independence as a sovereign, he had too much good sense to embroil himself with the disputes of the other governors, but applied himself with earnestness and success to the establishment of his own authority, and the advancement of the happiness of his people. Perdiccas judged that he would find in Ptolemy the

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chief obstacle to his ambitious views; and he therefore turned his attention first to the reduction of Egypt. In this enterprise he had the authority of the kings, on the plausible pretext, that Ptolemy had revolted from their sovereignty, and made himself an independent monarch. But the attempt was unsuccessful; he found it impracticable to make impression on the Egyptian frontier, which Ptolemy defended with a powerful army; his troops, disgusted with the severe and haughty manner of their leader, and exasperated with their ill success, mutinied, and assassinated him; and transferred their services and allegiance to the governor of Egypt.

Ptolemy, whose reputation was enhanced by the defeat of this enterprise, might now have succeeded to the power and authority of Perdiccas, as regent, under Aridæus and the infant prince; but he wisely declined that dangerous dignity, which could add nothing to his real power; and, on his refusal, it fell to Antipater, the governor of Macedonia. A new division was now made of the empire; and Babylon and Assyria were assigned to Seleucus. But Egypt still remained under Ptolemy, who had established his authority in that quarter upon a solid basis.

Eumenes, the governor of Cappadocia, a man of great merit, and firmly attached to the family of Alexander, was, from those circumstances, regarded with a jealous eye by the rest of his colleagues. Antipater, in the quality of Regent, proclaimed war against him, and he was betrayed and delivered up to Antigonus, the governor of Phrygia and Lydia, who put him to death, and

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seized upon his states. Antigonus, thus acquiring the command of a great part of the Asiatic provinces, began to aspire to the universal empire of Asia. He attacked and ravaged the dominions of the conterminous governors. Seleucus, the governor of Babylon, unable to make head against him in the field, fled into Egypt, and humbly sought the aid and protection of Ptolemy; who, alarmed at the designs of Antigonus, supported the fugitive with a powerful army, and reinstated him in his government of Babylon.

Seleucus was beloved by his subjects, and the time of his return to Babylon became a common epoch through all the Asiatic nations. It is called the era of the *Seleucidæ*, and is fixed 312 years before the birth of Christ. It is made use of all over the East, by Jews, Christians, and Mahometans. The Jews call it the *era of contracts;* because, when subject to the Syro-Macedonian princes, they were obliged to employ it in all contracts and civil deeds. The Arabians term it the *era of the two-horned;* a denomination taken from the coins or medals of Seleucus, in which he is represented with horns, like those of a ram. In the book of the Maccabees it is called the *era of the kingdom of the Greeks.*

Antigonus, however, persisted in his schemes of ambition. He sent his son, Demetrius, with a fleet against Ptolemy, which was victorious in an engagement with that of the Egyptians. It was on this occasion that Antigonus and Demetrius assumed to themselves the title of kings, in which they were imitated by all the other governors. A league was now formed against Antigonus and

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Demetrius, by Ptolemy and Seleucus, in which they were joined by Cassander, the son of Antipater, and Lysimachus; the former governor of Macedonia, and the latter of Thrace. The battle of Ipsus, in Phrygia, decided the contest. Antigonus was killed, Demetrius fled with the shattered remains of his army, and the conquerors made a partition of their dominions. Ptolemy, in addition to Egypt and Libya, had Arabia, Cœlo-Syria, and Palestine; and Cassander had Macedonia and Greece. The share of Lysimachus was Thrace, Bithynia, and some other provinces beyond the Hellespont. Seleucus had all the rest of Asia, to the river Indus. This last kingdom, the most powerful and splendid of the whole, was called the kingdom of Syria; of which the capital, Antioch, was built by Seleucus, and was the residence of the line of monarchs descended from him.

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## CHAPTER V.

Flourishing state of Egypt under the Ptolemies—Greece after the death of Alexander—Achaian league—Revolution at Lacedæmon—Ambitious designs of Philip II. of Macedon draw on him the vengeance of the Romans—Their aid solicited by the Ætolians—Macedonia conquered—Greece becomes a Roman province.

We have remarked, that, under the first Ptolemy, surnamed Soter, the kingdom of Egypt was extremely flourishing. This prince, a true patriot and wise politician, considered the happiness of his people as the first object of government. A lover himself of the arts and sciences, they attained, during his reign, to a degree of splendour which rivalled their state in the most illuminated days of Greece. It is remarkable that Greece, which owed her first dawning of literature and the arts to the Egyptians, should now contribute to polish and instruct her ancient masters. Ptolemy Soter founded the famous library of Alexandria*, that immense treasury of literature which, in the time of his son Ptolemy Philadelphus†, contained

* Ptolemy Soter was, himself, a man of letters, and wrote a history of the wars of Alexander, which was greatly esteemed, but has not come down to posterity.

† He was so named, ironically, for having put two of his brothers to death, from a jealousy of their popularity with his subjects.

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above 100,000 volumes. It was still enlarged by the succeeding monarchs of the same race, till it amounted, at length, as Strabo informs us, to seven hundred thousand volumes; a collection quite prodigious when we consider the comparative labour and expense of amassing books before the invention of printing, and since that era. This immense library was burnt to ashes in the war which Julius Cæsar waged with the inhabitants of Alexandria. Adjoining to this was a smaller library, which escaped the conflagration at that time, and which became, in the course of ages, very considerable; but, as if fate had opposed the progress and continuance of Egyptian literature, this second library of Alexandria was burnt, about eight hundred years afterwards, when the Saracens took possession of Egypt. The books were taken out by order of the caliph Omar, and used, for six months, in supplying the fires of the public baths. "If these books," said Omar, "contain nothing but what is in the Alcoran, they are of no use: if they contain any thing not in it, they are of no consequence to salvation; and if any thing contrary to it, they are damnable, and ought not to be suffered."

Ptolemy Philadelphus, the son of Soter, inherited the talents and many of the good qualities of his father, though stained with considerable blemishes; it was by the orders of this prince, who wished to understand the laws and the history of the Jews, and enrich his library with a copy of the Books of Moses, that that translation called the *Septuagint*, as being the work of seventy-two inter-

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preters, was made from the Hebrew into Greek*. Egypt continued still to flourish under the succeeding prince, Ptolemy Euergetes, who attained that glorious surname (*the Beneficent*) from his successful promotion of the prosperity and happi-

* These seventy-two interpreters are said to have been native Jews, six of the most learned men being chosen from each of the twelve tribes, and sent to Egypt by Eleazar, the high-priest, at the request of Ptolemy, who had conciliated his good will by releasing all the Jewish captives in Egypt. This account has been disputed upon no better ground than that a smaller number would have served the purpose as well as the larger.—See Prideaux. For four hundred years the Septuagint translation was held in such esteem by the Jews themselves, that it was read in many of the synagogues of Judæa in preference to the original. But when they saw that the Christians esteemed it equally, they then became desirous of exploding its credit; and in the second century, Aquila, an apostate Christian, was employed to make a new Greek version, in which he designedly perverted the sense of all the passages most directly applicable to our Saviour. Other translations were likewise made by Symmachus and Theodotion. The original version, by the carelessness of transcribers, also became very erroneous; so that, in the third century, Origen, in the view of forming a correct copy of the Scriptures, published first one edition in four columns (thence called *Tetrapla*), containing the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, along with the Hebrew text: and afterwards a second edition, called Hexapla, in which two other versions, the one found at Nicopolis, the other at Jericho, were added to the former. From a comparison of all these translations, Origen laudably endeavoured to settle the text of a genuine and complete translation of the Scriptures. The best modern edition of the Septuagint is that of Dr. Grabe, published in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Septuagint translation was in use in the time of our Saviour, and is that out of which most of the citations in the New Testament from the Old are taken. It was likewise the canonical translation used by all the Christian churches from the earliest ages.

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ness of his people. In the beginning of his reign he waged war with Antiochus of Syria, for the recovery of part of the Asiatic provinces which belonged to his hereditary kingdom; and, being successful in that enterprise, he brought home immense spoils, among which were a great number of paintings and statues, with which he enriched his capital of Alexandria. On returning by Jerusalem, Josephus informs us, that he offered sacrifice in the temple to the God of Israel, in thanksgiving for the victories he had gained over his enemies. It has been supposed that the Jews, to court his favour, showed to him the Prophecies of Daniel, in which his conquests appeared to be predicted. The Alexandrian library owed a great increase of its literary treasures to this prince.

The descendants of the first Ptolemy continued to fill the throne of Egypt for two hundred and ninety-two years. In the three first of these reigns the Egyptians were probably a greater, and certainly a much happier people, than they had ever been in those remote periods which historians have mentioned with poetical exaggeration.

In the preceding brief notices of the monarchies which rose from the ruins of the empire of Alexander, we have anticipated somewhat in the order of time. We must now recall our attention to the affairs of Greece posterior to the death of that monarch; and we shall very shortly trace the outlines of her history, till she becomes a province of the now extended empire; a melancholy period, enlivened by few of those scenes or events which either animate the feelings or engage the imagination.

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During the period of the conquests of Alexander, the Grecian republics remained for the most part in a state of torpid inactivity. One feeble effort for their emancipation from the Macedonian yoke was made in Peloponnesus by the Spartans, which was speedily repressed by Antipater, who, in one battle, put an end to all resistance. Some years after, while Alexander was on his expedition to India, Harpalus, whom he had appointed governor of Babylon, having amassed by tyranny and extortion the immense sum of five thousand talents, apprehensive that the conqueror, on his return, would bring him to a severe reckoning, passed over into Greece, where he employed his money in corrupting the orators of Athens and the chief men of that republic, in the view of establishing an independent power under his own authority and control. But he found, in the incorruptible virtue of Phocion, an insuperable obstacle to his designs. This venerable man acted on the same unshaken principles he had all along maintained; he could not consider Alexander as lawfully the master or sovereign of Greece; but he saw with regret that the era of Grecian liberty had long passed away, along with the virtuous manners of former times, and that a people thoroughly corrupted and degenerate were incapable of recovering their lost freedom, or maintaining it, though gained for a season. He wished, therefore, to preserve at least the peace and tranquillity of his country. But if we judge thus of the politics of Phocion, we cannot impute it for blame to his great rival, Demosthenes, that he cherished different views; and that as he had constantly opposed

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the ambitious designs of Philip, so he persevered in denying the sovereignty of Alexander. The enemies of Demosthenes attempted to bring his integrity under suspicion, by propagating a slanderous report, that he had accepted bribes from Harpalus, and entered into the views of that ambitious and bad man. But this accusation, which gained such credit at the time as to procure the banishment of Demosthenes, has, upon the most scrupulous inquiry, been deemed a calumny. The principal agent of Harpalus being put to the torture, to force a confession of the names of those Athenians who had accepted bribes from that traitor, solemnly acquitted Demosthenes of that dishonourable charge. A single hint from Alexander of his intention to revisit Greece was sufficient to defeat the schemes of Harpalus, and to procure his expulsion from Athens.

On intelligence of Alexander's death, a wonderful change was operated on the public mind in Greece. Liberty was now the universal cry. The people of Athens expressed the most tumultuous joy, and the Ecclesia resounded with the harangues of the orators and shouts of the applauding populace. Demosthenes, though in exile, engaged several of the states to join with the Athenians, and to equip a fleet of two hundred and forty galleys. The Spartans, dispirited by their late defeat by the arms of Antipater, refused to join the league for independence. Phocion, ever prudent and circumspect, advised the confederate states to wait the opportunity of those dissensions which he foresaw must infallibly arise among the different

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governors. But the counsel of Demosthenes, who proposed an immediate commencement of hostilities, suited better with the ardour of their present feelings. The advice of Phocion was justified by the event. Antipater, after some severe checks from the troops of the confederate states, finally defeated them, and reduced all to submission. In punishment of the offence of Athens, he abolished the democratic government, and established in its room an aristocracy, of which he had the absolute control. He compelled the Athenians to defray the whole expenses of the war; and, finally, demanded that they should deliver up to him Demosthenes. This illustrious man, foreseeing inevitable death, swallowed poison.

Of the tendency of the political counsels of Demosthenes, in contrast with those of Phocion, I have already expressed a general opinion. The principle which prompted the counsels of the former was certainly noble. His views were unquestionably disinterested, for he supported the cause even of decaying and hopeless liberty against successful ambition, and, amidst every attempt to seduce him from his principles, he remained to the last the avowed enemy of the enslavers of his country. The question of preference between his politics and those of Phocion comes to this short issue: whether was it more advisable for the Greeks, corrupted and degenerate as they were, to submit peaceably to that servitude which they could not avoid, and patiently to bear the yoke which they had not strength to break; or, by continual resistance, to mark, at least, a desire of

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their ancient freedom—an indignant spirit, which rose against their situation; and thus to give a testimony to their tyrant that, though oppressed, they were not subdued; though compelled to submit, they were not tame and voluntary slaves. The former was, perhaps, the more prudent and the safer part; the latter, without doubt, the more honourable.

The Athenians themselves, after the death of Demosthenes, gave an ample expression of their sense of his patriotic merits, as well as of the generosity of his counsels; for it was their character, as we have seen, oftener to expiate their offences to the dead, than to do justice to the living. They erected a statue in the Prytaneum to his memory, with this inscription:—"*If thy power, O Demosthenes, had been equal to thy wisdom and abilities, the Macedonian Mars had never ruled in Greece* *."

We have already remarked those dissensions which, after the death of Alexander, arose among the governors of the different provinces, upon the first division of the empire made by Perdiccas. The new partition made by Antipater, on his acquiring the regency, gave rise to fresh disputes, and all were soon in arms and commotion. This was certainly the crisis that the Greeks should have awaited for throwing off the Macedonian yoke; but, too impatient and eager to seize the first opening that promised success to their design, their country became the theatre of war, affected by all the revolutions of the empire, and succes-

* Εἰπερ ἴσην ῥώμην γνώμῃ, Δημόσθενες, ἔιχες,
Οὔποτ' ἂν Ἑλλήνων ἦρξεν Ἄρης Μακεδών.

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sively the prey of every ambitious governor whose power happened to predominate. Antipater, in making a new division of the provinces, was actuated by the twofold view of strengthening his own authority and weakening that of his rivals, whose firm establishment in their governments had elevated them to the rank, and caused the greater part of them to assume the title, of *kings*. His policy was therefore judicious, but death put a period to his projects. He bequeathed Macedonia and the government of Greece to Polysperchon, one of Alexander's oldest officers, in preference to his own son Cassander, who, considering this as an act of injustice, prepared to assert his hereditary right by arms. He applied, in that view, to Antigonus, and received from him the aid of a large army, which, under the command of Nicanor, invaded Greece, and, attacking the city of Athens, seized the Piræus, and put a garrison into the citadel. Polysperchon, however, retained the Athenians in allegiance to his authority, by promising them the restitution of their democratic government, in place of the aristocracy established by Antipater. The revolution was accomplished; the partisans of the former government were condemned to death, and among these the old and venerable Phocion. Ever a friend to the tranquillity of his country, he had favoured the party of the aristocracy, and had on that account incurred the popular resentment, which was now extreme, against all whom they regarded as enemies to democracy. Phocion, at the age of eighty, was condemned to drink hemlock. The last request he made to his son was that he should

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endeavour to forget the injustice and ingratitude which the Athenians had shown to his father.

Meantime Cassander arrived with an army to the aid of Nicanor, and to support his own claims to Macedonia and Greece. Their united forces drove Polysperchon out of Attica, and forced him to retreat to Peloponnesus. Cassander subdued the Athenians, overturned the newly established democracy, and obliged the party of the nobles to elect one of their own number to preside as a governor under his control. They chose Demetrius Phalereus, a descendant of Conon, and a man of distinguished virtue and ability. Under his administration, which was of ten years' continuance, the Athenians were truly happy. The revenues of the state were increased, the useful arts encouraged, the strictest attention paid to the administration of justice, and to the reformation of all those abuses which had arisen from their late disorders and fluctuations of government. In short, this fickle people might have enjoyed real prosperity, had they possessed a true feeling of their real interests, and known how to value the blessings of peace and good order. But this was not their character; every change was acceptable to the Athenians. They idolised their present governor, Demetrius, and erected three hundred statues to his honour. We shall presently see the emptiness of these testimonies of popular favour.

Under the regency of Polysperchon, there was an utter extinction of the family of Alexander the Great. His mother, Olympias, had retired into Epirus during the regency of Antipater; but she was invited by Polysperchon to return to Mace-



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donia. Scarcely was she settled there, when her ambition and cruelty projected and accomplished the death of the weak Aridæus, the nominal successor to the empire of his brother Alexander, as well as of his queen Eurydice. By these abominable measures, she took on herself the administration of government, as the guardian of her infant grandson, the son of Alexander by Roxana. She had likewise put to death the brother of Cassander, and some principal men among the Macedonians, who had shown themselves hostile to her designs. On the plausible pretence of avenging those crimes, but in reality to serve his own ambitious ends, Cassander besieged her in the town of Pydna, and, taking the place by assault, Olympias became his prisoner, and was soon after put to death by his orders.

This great bar to his ambition being removed, Cassander kept the young prince and his mother, Roxana, in close confinement in the city of Amphipolis. But the Macedonians expressing their impatience till their native sovereign should assume the reins of government, Cassander caused both him and his mother to be privately murdered. The people expressed their resentment in murmurs; but such was the power of the usurper, that none dared openly to impeach or question his proceedings. Meantime Polysperchon, whom he had expelled from Macedonia and who now governed in Peloponnesus, sent for Hercules, a younger son of Alexander by Barsine, from Pergamus, declaring his resolution to present him to the Macedonians and cause his title to be acknowledged as their lawful sovereign. This new obsta-

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cle was removed by Cassander, who artfully won Polysperchon to his interest by confirming him in the government of Peloponnesus. The main condition of their treaty was, that the young Hercules and his mother should both be put to death.

There were now remaining of the family of Alexander, only two sisters; Cleopatra, the widow of Alexander king of Epirus; and Thessalonice, the wife of Cassander. Cleopatra, who had for some time resided at Sardis in Lydia, seeing herself treated with little respect by Antigonus, the governor of that province, had betaken herself to Egypt, on the invitation of Ptolemy Soter; but she was brought back by order of Antigonus, and privately put to death. Thessalonice was afterwards murdered by one of her own sons, the second Antipater, in revenge for her having favoured the claims of his brother to the succession of his paternal dominions. Thus within the compass of twenty-eight years from the death of Alexander the Great, there remained not one alive of all his family or kindred.

Antigonus, whose extensive projects we have already noticed, was perhaps the most ambitious of all those governors who shared the empire of Alexander. Not satisfied with almost the whole of the Asiatic provinces, his object was now the sovereignty of Greece; and in that view he sent thither his son Demetrius Poliorcetes, a young man of great talents, and perfectly disposed to co-operate in all his schemes of ambition. With the command of a large army he made an attack on the Athenian territory, seized the Piræus without opposition, expelled the garrison of Demetrius



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Phalereus, and brought over the populace to his interest, by restoring the democratic constitution. The Athenians, happy as they had been under the government of Phalereus, could not resist the charms of revolution. The three hundred statues, which in proof of their gratitude they had erected to his honour, were thrown down and demolished; he was expelled the territory of the republic, and his rival Poliorcetes hailed the deliverer of Athens. The excellent Phalereus found an asylum at the court of Ptolemy Soter in Egypt.

The life of Demetrius Poliorcetes was a perpetual series of reverses of fortune. During an interval of his absence from Athens, the city was seized by Cassander. Poliorcetes flying to its relief rescued Attica from its invader; and the people, in the fervour of their zeal, proposed, as the highest rank of honour, to lodge their deliverer in the temple of their tutelary goddess, Minerva. After the battle of Ipsus, in which, as we formerly observed, his father Antigonus was killed, this same Poliorcetes, twice hailed the deliverer of Athens, was refused an asylum in that city when he fled thither for protection. When a change of fortune had secured the safety of his paternal dominions in Asia, he determined to avenge himself of the ungrateful Athenians. He landed in Attica wtih a numerous army, blocked up the harbour at the same time with his fleet, and after a long and vigorous siege, compelled the Athenians to surrender and throw themselves upon his mercy. He forgave them all past offences, and became once more their idol. Meantime a league was formed between Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, who

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divided Asia between them, and Poliorcetes was stripped of all his eastern territories. Thus reduced to the possession only of a few of the cities of Greece, he was on the point of losing even these, when the dissensions between the children of Cassander put him in possession of the crown of Macedonia. He was chosen to mediate in their differences; he found means to rid himself of the competitors, and seized the crown for himself. But destined as it would seem to a perpetual vicissitude of fortune, his new subjects of Macedonia, dissatisfied with the government of a sovereign who had no just claims to their allegiance, rebelled, and deserting his standard threw themselves under the rule of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus. Poliorcetes fled into Asia, where, after a variety of events of little importance to the chain of history, he surrendered himself a prisoner to Seleucus, at whose court, dispirited and careless of life, he abandoned himself to excessive debauchery, and soon after died.

Such was the fate of the successors of Alexander, and such the catastrophe of his family; and thus feeble and fluctuating were most of those monarchies which were raised from the ruins of his empire. Great in extent of territory, they had no internal strength, or any principle of union or durability. It was their lot to be governed by restless, jealous, and ambitious men; the perpetual jarring of whose interests gave them no intervals of tranquillity, nor allowed any attention to the settlement of their kingdoms, or the regulation of their domestic policy. These monarchies were, therefore, subject to perpetual revolutions; but all

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being alike deficient in that native strength which arises from a long-established government, there was not in any individual power a sufficiency of vigour to overwhelm or subjugate the rest. The general weakness of those kingdoms thus secured them against their incorporation and subjection to the government of any one of those ambitious rulers; while it paved the way for an easy conquest, and successive reduction, of the whole under the yoke of a foreign power.

In that period from the death of Alexander the Great which we have thus hastily run over, the proper history of the states of Greece presents only a series of unimportant revolutions; frequent and violent transitions from one form of government to another; political changes, not operated as formerly by the internal spirit or genius of the different commonwealths—or by those animated contentions which gave room for the display of the noble and manly passions—but effected at once by the will of a despot on a submissive, spiritless, and corrupted people. Yet, amidst this general weakness and degeneracy, there existed in a corner of this country a small people till now scarcely known, who still retained their ancient manners, and who preserved in a considerable degree the ardour of true patriotism and the love of their ancient liberty. These were the states of Achaia.

In those early times when all the cities of Greece, as if by general consent, shook off the yoke of their domestic tyrants, the cities of Achaia, Patræ, Dymæ, Tritæa, Pharæ, Ægium, and some others, had armed for their common liberty, and having deposed or expelled their governors, formed

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a league of association on a basis of perfect equality. It was agreed that each of the cities should be ruled by its own laws and magistrates; and that all affairs regarding their common interests should be treated in a senate, which should assemble twice in the year at Ægium, to which convention each of the associated states should send their deputies. No treaty could be formed, no alliance made, no war undertaken or peace concluded, without the consent of the whole body. Two presidents of the assembly were yearly elected, called Στρατηγοι or prætors. It was their duty to summon the states, and in them the authority of the body was vested during the intervals when it was not assembled. Such was the small but respectable republic of Achaia.

Till the era of the division of Alexander's empire, the Achaians had taken no share in the revolutions of Greece, having no ambition of extending their own territory or power, and no wealth to tempt the ambition of other states. They were enslaved, however, after that era by some of those turbulent governors, and several of their cities were garrisoned by Polysperchon, Demetrius Poliorcetes, Cassander, and Antigonus Gonatas. Others suffered from the usurpation of domestic tyrants, and the ancient association seemed entirely at an end. The following circumstance, however, incited the states to a renewal of their leagues. The people of Ætolia, a set of lawless freebooters, emboldened by the disorders of Greece, began to make incursions on Peloponnesus. The territories of the Achaian states, lying immediately opposite to them, were most exposed

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to their ravages. On this occasion Dymæ, Patræ, Pharæ, and Tritæa renewed their league of association on its ancient principles, and they were joined soon after by the Tegæans and some of the other states of Peloponnesus. In one respect they improved on their former constitution, by electing only one president or prætor instead of two, and they were fortunate in choosing for that office a man truly deserving of it.

Aratus of Sicyon, when a youth of twenty years of age, had acquired a high reputation by delivering his native state from a domestic *tyranny*, and joining it to the associated republics. This young man was a singular phenomenon in those days of degeneracy. He possessed uncommon endowments of mind, and a heart which glowed with the love of honour and of his country. He was vigilant, enterprising, and prompt in decision; and he possessed that ready and forcible eloquence which is of the greatest importance to the magistrate of a democracy. Aratus was in the twenty-eighth year of his age when he was elected prætor of Achaia; and, invested with that honourable office, he formed the patriotic design of delivering Peloponnesus from the yoke of Macedonia. In the first year of his magistracy, he expelled the Macedonian garrison from Corinth; a most important measure, which gave the united states the command of the isthmus and entry to Peloponnesus. The consequence of this success was that the states of Megara, Trœzene, and Epidaurus joined the Achaian confederacy.

The republic of Achaia was not fitted to support an offensive war, for two strong reasons. A number

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of separate, independent republics, however connected by a common interest, cannot always act with a perfect unanimity, and their measures are consequently seldom attended with that celerity of execution on which success so much depends. Moreover, the confederate states were neither populous nor wealthy, and, of course, they could not muster a strong force in the field. Aratus was quite sensible of these defects, and therefore bent his chief attention to the securing his country from attack, and from the necessity of going to war; and this he wisely judged would be best effected by strengthening the league with the accession of some of the more powerful states of Greece.

In that view he made his proposals both to Athens and Lacedæmon; but these commonwealths, though still affecting a passion for liberty, could not, from a despicable pride, brook the thought of owing their freedom to the petty states of Achaia. The situation of the Lacedæmonians at this time was indeed such as to engross all attention to their domestic concerns, as that republic was actually in the very crisis of a revolution.

Agis IV. had succeeded to one branch of the throne of Sparta a short time before Aratus was chosen prætor of the Achaian states. This prince, a better man than a wise politician, had cherished the chimerical project of restoring the ancient laws of Lycurgus, as conceiving this the only means of rescuing his country from the disorders induced by the universal corruption of its manners. But there is a period when political infirmity has attained such a pitch that recovery is impossible; and Sparta had arrived at that period. The

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design of Agis, of course, embraced the radical reform of a new division of all the land of the republic—a project sufficient to rouse the indignation and secure the mortal enmity of the whole of the higher class of citizens, and of almost every man of weight and consideration in his country. The plan was therefore to be conducted with the greatest caution and secrecy till sufficiently ripened for execution; but Agis was betrayed by his own confidants. Leonidas, his colleague in the sovereignty, had imbibed a relish for luxury from his Asiatic education at the court of Seleucus, and was thus easily persuaded to take the part of the richer citizens in opposing this violent revolution, which threatened to reduce all ranks of men to a level of equality. The premature discovery of his scheme was fatal to its virtuous author; for the party of his opponents was so formidable, that after compelling Agis to take shelter in the Temple of Minerva, they seized the opportunity of his going to the bath, and dragged him to the common prison, where a tribunal of the Ephori, summoned by his colleague Leonidas, sat ready to judge him as a state criminal. He was asked, by whose evil counsel he had been prompted to disturb the laws and government of his country? "I needed none to prompt me," said the king, "to act as I thought right. My design was to restore your ancient laws, and to govern according to the plan of the excellent Lycurgus; and, though I see my death is inevitable, I do not repent of my design." The judges hereupon pronounced sentence of death, and the virtuous Agis was carried forth from their presence and immediately strangled.

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This example did not deter Cleomenes, the son of Leonidas, and his successor in one branch of the sovereignty, from cherishing the same patriotic design which had proved fatal to Agis, and which his own father had so keenly opposed. Cleomenes proposed the twofold object of delivering Sparta from the Macedonian yoke and of restoring the ancient system of Lycurgus. He began by the judicious measure of attaching the army to his interest, securing the confidence and allegiance of all the principal officers, and dexterously removing from command such as he judged to be unfriendly to the revolutionary design. Several of the richer citizens, and even some of the Ephori, from whom he expected opposition, were on various pretences banished or put to death. Trusting to the ready co-operation of the lower orders, he then assembled the people, and detailing the great benefits to be expected from a complete change of system, proclaimed the abolition of all the debts, and beginning by divesting himself of the whole of his property, made a new partition of the lands of the republic, and restored the ancient plan of education, the institution of the public tables, and in a word, as nearly as possible, the long-forgotten regimen of Lycurgus. Cleomenes was hailed the second founder and father of his country, and Greece resounded with his praise, and boundless applause and admiration of the regenerated Lacedæmonians.

This revolution, which in reality was favourable to the great object of the Achaian league, the subversion of the Macedonian influence in Greece, did not, however, meet with that cordial

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approbation which it ought to have found from the states of Achaia. Instead of being the leaders in the great and patriotic design of vindicating the national liberty, they now feared that Sparta was destined to eclipse their glory by assuming that honourable pre-eminence. Such was the influence of pride and jealousy, that even the virtuous Aratus now affected to consider Cleomenes and the Spartans as cherishing views more hostile to the liberty and independence of the Grecian republics, by elevating the hated power of Lacedæmon, than even the control of the Macedonians. The consequence was that, with a policy which it is not easy to justify upon any principle of disinterested patriotism, Aratus and the Achaians now formed a strict alliance with Macedon to oppose, as they pretended, the ambitious design of the Spartans to be the rulers of Greece.

Antigonus Doson at this time governed Macedonia, in the minority of his nephew Philip, the son of Demetrius. He gladly entered into the designs of Aratus, which he naturally thought were most effectually subservient to the Macedonian interests; and entering Peloponnesus with a large army, attacked the Spartans under Cleomenes, and in one sanguinary battle left above 5000 dead upon the field. Cleomenes, seeing all was lost, fled for shelter to Egypt. Sparta fell into the hands of the conqueror, and its newly regenerated constitution, with its short-lived freedom, were now annihilated for ever. Antigonus imposed upon the Lacedæmonians an easy yoke. Satisfied with an acknowledgment of their submission to the controul of Macedon, he

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allowed them to model their laws and constitution as they should judge best, and to elect their own magistrates. It may be believed they made no further attempt to revive the system of Lycurgus.

Antigonus died soon after, and was succeeded in the kingdom of Macedon by his nephew Philip, then a youth of seventeen years of age, endowed by nature with excellent talents and many valuable qualities of a sovereign. He was brave, eloquent, and of a great address in moulding men to his purposes, which were not always the designs of a man of virtue and probity. Philip owed much to his uncle's care of his education and the early instruction he received in the science of government: he possessed great ambition, and was not scrupulous in the means of indulging it. His object very early appeared to be the dominion of all Greece; and the want of a bond of union among its states, and their eternal jealousies and quarrels, gave him every advantage. His ambition, however, and a train of success in the beginning of his career, inspired him with a confidence in his own plans, which in the end proved his destruction and the ruin of his own kingdom. After some considerable successes against the Ætolians, which gave him a high character as a general, the important contest at that time carrying on between the Romans and the Carthaginians appeared to offer to Philip, by the medium of a junction with Hannibal, the means not only of subjugating Greece, but of sharing in the spoils of Italy. Seduced by these flattering prospects, Philip concluded a treaty with Hannibal, by which he agreed to furnish a large

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fleet and army for the conquest of Italy ; in return for which service, Hannibal agreed, after subduing the Romans, to invade Epirus and reduce it under the dominion of Macedon. This treaty was carried so far into effect by a large fleet under Philip, which entered the Ionian Gulf and seized the seaport of Oricum; but a fatal defeat ensued, and the armament of Philip returned with dishonour and mortification to his own ports.

The period was now come when the Romans first obtained a footing in Greece. This devoted nation was now prepared for slavery, and its destiny could not be averted. Philip, mortified by his late disaster, now bent his whole thoughts on the sovereignty of Greece. He was in league with the Achaian states ; but the virtues of Aratus were an insurmountable bar to his ambition; it was therefore necessary that this obstacle should be removed, and the Macedonian was not scrupulous in his choice of means. He procured the death both of Aratus and of his son by poison, and in their extinction the last feeble prop of the Grecian liberty was cut away. Philip had now the command of the Achaian league, and seemed fast advancing to the attainment of his great object ; but, in provoking the enmity of the Romans, he had imprudently paved the way for his own destruction. Having renewed his attacks upon the Ætolians, this people, with a very natural but most imprudent policy, courted aid from the Romans, who cheerfully complied with a request which was to avenge their own quarrel and gratify their passion of conquest. They declared themselves protectors of the liberties of Greece, which they were determined to

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defend against invasion from any other quarter than their own. Flaminius, being sent with a large army into that country, defeated Philip in a decisive engagement at Cynoscephalæ, and speedily compelled him to sue for peace upon these humiliating terms, that all the Greek cities, both in Europe and Asia, should be declared free and independent of Macedonia; that every Greek or Roman captive should be set at liberty; that he should surrender to the Romans the whole of his armed ships of war, with the exception of five small vessels, and pay the sum of 1000 talents; and, finally, that his son Demetrius should be given up to the Romans as a hostage for security of the performance of these conditions. Such was the infatuation of the degenerate Greeks, that this treaty, which distinctly proclaimed their subjection to a foreign power much more formidable than Macedonia, and now rapidly advancing to universal dominion, was hailed by them as a new epoch of liberty.

The treaty of Cynoscephalæ in reality put a period to the kingdom of Macedon. Philip sunk into absolute insignificance. Seduced by false information from his younger son Perseus, he caused Demetrius, his elder son, to be put to death. He died himself soon after; and Perseus, defeated in the battle of Pydna by the consul Æmilius, was compelled to surrender himself with all his family into the hands of the victor. Precipitated from the throne, this unhappy prince attended in chains the triumphal chariot of Æmilius, and died a prisoner in Italy. Thus ended the kingdom of Macedonia, which now became a Roman province, under the government of a proconsul.

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The Romans, from the period of the conquest of the Macedonian kingdom, made rapid advances to the dominion of all Greece. In this progress their art was more conspicuous than their virtue. They gained their end by fostering dissensions between the republics; offering themselves as arbiters of differences, which they contrived should always terminate in their own favour, and bringing over by corruption the principal men of the different states to their interest. While they were confessedly the most powerful nation on earth, they employed that species of policy which is excusable only in the weak. A procedure of this kind is not fitted to command the reverence of a generous enemy. The Achaian states held that policy in contempt, and they did not scruple to insult the deputies of imperial Rome. This drew upon them the thunder of the Roman arms. Metellus marched into Greece with his legions, gave them battle, and entirely defeated them. Mummius, the consul, terminated the work, and made an easy conquest of the whole of Greece, which from that time became a Roman province, under the name of Achaia.

Athens alone had offered no resistance, and therefore could not be said to be as yet subdued. This versatile republic had always flattered the predominant power, and thence had preserved a bastard species of liberty much akin to servitude. The Romans assisted the Athenians in a war against the Acarnanians, but Athens unwisely deprived herself of this alliance by concluding a treaty with an enemy of the Romans, Mithridates, king of Pontus. Aristion was the adviser of this

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imprudent measure, and Mithridates rewarded his services by raising him to the tyranny of Athens; an elevation which was dearly purchased, for Sylla besieged and took the city of Athens, delivered it for a day to the fury and plunder of his troops, and put Aristion to death. From that period, the Athenians quietly submitted to the dominion of Rome. They were allowed to retain their form of a democracy, which was now more quietly administered that their liberty was extinct, and there was no object to rouse the passions or inflame the turbulent spirit of the populace.

The Romans treated Greece with more peculiar favour and distinction than any other of the conquered provinces of the empire. The ancient habit of associating with that people the idea of all that in past ages was respectable in virtue or in valour, and more recently the idea of a singular eminence in philosophy, and the culture of the fine arts, had assuredly great weight in maintaining this favourable opinion of a degenerate and fallen people. Low as they had sunk in the scale of true greatness, the Greeks were yet in some respects superior to their conquerors. Rome was arrived at that period when the severer virtues which distinguished the first ages of the commonwealth had yielded to that refinement which arises from, and in its turn cherishes, the cultivation of letters and the taste for the fine arts. In these respects, Greece was to Rome an instructor and a model.

> Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
> Intulit agresti Latio.—*Hor. Ep. ad Aug.*

Hence she was still regarded in an honourable



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point of view by her conquerors,—a consideration which leads us, at this period of the termination of the history of Greece, to take a short view of the national character and attainments in those departments of art and science in which the Greeks still continued to make a distinguished figure among the contemporary nations. Previously, however, to these considerations, the preceding sketch of the history of Greece furnishes naturally some political reflections which shall be the subject of the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER VI.

Political Reflections arising from the History of Greece—Retrospective View—Constitutional Defects in the leading Republics—A pure Democracy is a Chimera—All Government essentially of the Nature of a Monarchy—Error of Montesquieu's Theory—Fergusson's Idea of a perfect Republic—Democracy unfavourable to Patriotism—Danger of generalising in Politics—A rude State of Society favourable to Patriotism—Greece a strong Instance of this—Character of Greece after the Roman Conquest.

We have now traced Greece from her origin; from the rude and barbarous periods when she owed even the most necessary arts of life to foreign instructors, through every stage of her progress to the highest rank among the civilised nations of the earth. We have seen the foundation and rise of her independent states; the vigorous perseverance by which they succeeded in shaking off the yoke of intolerable tyranny, and establishing a popular system of government; the alternate differences of these states from petty quarrels, the fruit of ambition and the love of power; while at the same time, they cordially united their strength and resources to oppose foreign hostilities, when such were formidable enough to threaten their liberties as a nation. We have remarked the domestic disorders which sprang from the abuse of that freedom which these republics enjoyed; and, finally,



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that general corruption of manners which, tainting all the springs of public virtue, and annihilating patriotism, at length brought this illustrious nation entirely under subjection to a foreign yoke. The revolutions which in this progress the states of Greece underwent, and the situations into which they were thrown by their alternate connexion and differences, as well as by their wars with foreign powers, were so various, that their history is a school of instruction in politics, as there is scarce a doctrine in that important science which may not find an example or an illustration from their history.

The science of politics, like every other subject of philosophical speculation, admits of a variety of opposite and contradictory opinions—a truth the more to be lamented that of all sciences it is that where for the interest of mankind it were most to be wished that our reasonings should rest upon solid and fixed principles. If, however, there is in reality any criterion of the solidity of abstract principles in political reasoning, it must be when we ascertain their coincidence or disagreement with actual experience in the history of nations. I shall adopt this criterion in laying before my readers a few reflections which naturally arise from the foregoing short delineation of the Grecian history.

The miserable oppression which, according to all accounts of the ancient historians, the states of Greece sustained under their first governors, a set of tyrants, who owed their elevation to violence, and whose rule was subject to no controul from existing laws or constitutional restraints, was assuredly a most justifiable motive on the part of

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the people for emancipating themselves from that state of servitude, and for abolishing entirely that worst of governments—a pure despotism. It is therefore with pleasure we remark, in the early history of this nation, the noble exertion by which those states shook off the yoke of their tyrants, and established for themselves a new system of government on the just and rational basis of an equality of rights and privileges in all the members of the commonwealth. We admit, without scruple, the belief that those new republics were framed by their virtuous legislators in the true spirit of patriotism. But the intentions of the legislator are no test of the actual merits of the institutions themselves: and it is certain that those boasted republics were very far from exhibiting in practice that perfect system of political freedom which was expected from them in theory. We seek, in vain, either in the history of Athens or of Lacedæmon, for the beautiful idea on which speculative writers have exercised their fancy of a well-ordered commonwealth.

In treating formerly of the peculiar constitution of those two great and leading states, we endeavoured to point out such circumstances as appeared to be defects in the constitution of those political fabrics. In the republic of Sparta, Lycurgus, by exterminating luxury, by the equal partition of the lands, and by banishing every motive to the ambition of individuals, certainly laid the foundation of that equality among the citizens of his commonwealth which is essential to the constitution of a perfect republic. Yet, under the Spartan government, there were some circum-

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stances which seem totally adverse to this spirit of equality. It was adverse to equality that there should be any citizen invested with the honours and appendages of royalty. The idea of a king possessing rank without power is an absurdity; and if the law denies it him, it will be his constant endeavour to wrest and arrogate it. The high authority of the Ephori was likewise adverse to the spirit of equality. There was a perpetual contention for superiority of power between those magistrates and the kings; and the people, dividing themselves into parties, bribed to support those opposite and contending interests, furnished a continual source of faction and disorder.

In the Athenian republic the great defect of the constitution seemed to be in this, that it was doubtful where the supreme power was definitively lodged. The senate was, in theory, a wise institution, for it possessed the sole power of convoking the assemblies of the people, and of preparing all business that was to be the subject of discussion in those assemblies. But, on the other hand, this senate being annually elected, its members were ever under the necessity of courting that people for their votes, and of flattering their prejudices and passions, by adopting and proposing measures which had no other end than to render themselves popular. These delegates were therefore the mean dependants on the mob who elected them. The guardians nominally of the people's rights, they were themselves the abject slaves of a corrupted populace. The wise purpose of the institution was thus utterly defeated by the single circumstance of the senators being annually elected. There were

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other radical defects in the constitution of Athens. All the offices of the state were by Solon destined to be filled from the three first classes of the richer citizens. The fourth, or inferior class (Θητες), had however an equal right of suffrage in the public assembly, and being superior in number to all the other three, had it in their power to carry every question against the higher classes. Thus there was a perpetual source of discord inherent in this constitution; the power and pre-eminence of office exclusively vested in one division of the people, which they would jealously maintain by every possible means; while, at the same time, the other was furnished with arms sufficient to defeat that power altogether, or, at least, to maintain at all times a violent struggle for superiority.

The best apology that can be made for Solon is, that his intentions were good. He knew that a constitution purely democratic is an absolute chimera in politics. He knew that the people are themselves incapable of exercising rule, and that, under one name or another, they must be led and controlled. He wished, therefore, to give them this controul by the natural means which the rich possess over the poor; in other words, to moderate the discordant counsels of a populace, in whom lay the right of deciding, by the influence of an aristocracy who might lead or dictate those decisions; but he knew not how to accomplish this by a clear and explicit definition of the powers of the one body over the other; whence it happened, that neither part of the public having its rights and privileges well defined, they were perpetually quarrelling about the limits of authority, and

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instead of a salutary and cordial co-operation for the general good of the state, it was an eternal contest for supremacy, and a mutual desire of each other's abasement.

These, which may be esteemed radical defects in the constitution of the two principal republics of Greece, were heightened by several very impolitic laws and customs peculiar to each, which, as I formerly touched on them, I shall not recapitulate. It is sufficient to say, that the detail of the systems of Solon and Lycurgus, such as they are described to us by ancient writers, and the history of those rival republics, both in their quarrels with each other, in their foreign wars, and above all in their intestine factions and disorders, afford full conviction that the form of government which they enjoyed was in itself extremely faulty. The revolutions to which those states, and particularly the former, was subject, plainly prove that their constitutions were not framed for stability, or for any long measure of duration; and the condition of the people (the true criterion of the merit of any political fabric) was, in reality, such as to partake more of actual servitude and oppression than the condition of the subjects of the most despotic monarchies. It is a known fact, that the slaves formed by far the greater part of the inhabitants, both of the Athenian and Lacedæmonian states; and to these, more especially at Lacedæmon, the free citizens behaved with the most inhuman rigour. Neither were the free citizens more inclined to a humane and liberal conduct to those of their own condition; a debtor became *ipso facto* the slave and bondman of his

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creditor, who might compel him to labour in bondage and fetters at his pleasure. Thus, a great part, even of the free citizens, was actually enslaved to the other; a circumstance which we shall see, under the Roman commonwealth, was the source of the most violent civil commotions. We may judge then with what propriety these can be termed free governments, where abject slavery was the condition of the majority of the people. Nor were the superior classes in the actual enjoyment of a rational liberty and independence. They were perpetually divided into factions, which servilely ranked themselves under the banners of the contending demagogues; and these maintained their influence over their partisans by the most shameful corruption and bribery, of which the means were supplied alone by the plunder of the public money. The whole, therefore, was a regular system of servitude, which left nothing free or ingenuous in the condition of individuals, nor any thing that can justly furnish encomium to an unprejudiced advocate for the dignity of human nature.

If such was the condition of the chief republics of antiquity, whose liberty we so frequently hear extolled with boundless encomium, and whose constitution we are taught from our childhood to admire, (and, in fact, this may fairly be ranked among the prejudices with which ingenuous youth can scarcely fail to be tinctured from a classical education,) it is not, perhaps, unreasonable to conclude, that a pure and perfect democracy is a thing not attainable by man, constituted as he is of contending elements of vice and virtue, and

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ever mainly influenced by the predominant principle of self-interest. It may, indeed, be confidently asserted, that there never was that government called a republic, which was not ultimately ruled by a single will, and, therefore, (however bold may seem the paradox,) virtually and substantially a monarchy. The only difference between governments, with respect to the political freedom of the subject, consists in the greater or the smaller number of restraints by which the regulating will is controlled. This subject is sufficiently important to merit a short illustration.

In every regular state there must be a governing power, whose will regulates the community. In the most despotic governments, that power is lodged in a single person, whose will is subject to no other control than that which arises from the fear of his own deposition. Of this we have an example in the Ottoman government, which approaches the nearest of any monarchy we know to a pure despotism. But in most monarchies, the will of the person called the sovereign is limited by certain constitutional restraints which he cannot transgress with safety. In the British government the will of the prince is controlled by a parliament; in other limited monarchies, by a council of state, whose powers are acknowledged and defined. But this parliament, or council, which thus limits the will of the prince, is in those matters where it exercises its right of limitation superior to the will of the prince, and, therefore, in fact, the sovereign power of the state. Now this controlling power, consisting apparently of a

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number of wills, is in reality always led by a single will; by some individual of great and commanding talents, to whose acknowledged superiority his equals in rank or office either all pay a willing obedience, or whose partisans are generally sufficient to outnumber his opponents. Thus we have a single will in the council opposed to, or controlling, the will of the prince. But where there are two contending wills, one must of necessity yield to the other. The king must either rule the leader of the council, or the latter must rule the former; and in this case, though not nominally, it cannot be denied that the latter is in reality, in any such exercise of his will, the supreme power of the state.

Thus it is in limited monarchies. Now how does the matter stand with respect to a republic or democracy? Precisely the same. The people flatter themselves that they have the sovereign power. These are, in fact, words without meaning. It is true they elect their governors; but how are these elections brought about? In every instance of election by the mass of a people—through the influence of those governors themselves, and by means the most opposite to a free and disinterested choice, by the basest corruption and bribery. But these governors once elected, where is the boasted freedom of the people? They must submit to their rule and control, with the same abandonment of their natural liberty, the freedom of their will, and the command of their actions, as if they were under the rule of a monarch. But these governors, it is said, are, in a republic, chosen from the people itself, and therefore will respect its interests; they

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are not one but many, and the will of each will have a controul from that of his fellows. That they are chosen from the people affords no pledge that they will either be wiser men, or less influenced by selfish ambition, or the passion of tyrannising; all experience goes to prove the contrary: and that the will of the many is in truth a mere chimera, and ultimately resolves into the will of one, we have already shown. An equality of power and a freedom of will cannot exist in a society of a hundred rulers, or even in a decemvirate, a triumvirate, or barely in a divided sovereignty, as the commonwealth of Sparta. The superior ability will constantly draw after it the superior command, and be in effect the sovereign of the state; it matters not under which name, whether emperor, king, consul, protector, stadtholder, or simply tribune or burgomaster.

If that principle I set out with is a truth, viz., that actual experience deduced from the history of nations is the surest test of the truth or falsehood of any doctrine of politics, it may be no useless task if we endeavour to apply this criterion to some political doctrines which have the support of a great name, and have on that account obtained a pretty general currency.

The author of the "Spirit of Laws," a work which must ever be regarded as the production of a most enlightened mind, has built a great deal of plausible and ingenious reasoning on this general idea, that the three distinct forms of government, the monarchical, the despotic, and the republican, are influenced by three separate principles, upon which the whole system in each form

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is constructed, and on which it must depend for its support. "The principle of the monarchical form," says Montesquieu, "is *honour;* of the despotical, *fear;* and of the republican, *virtue:*" a position which, if true, would at once determine to which of the three forms the preference ought to be given in speculating on their comparative degrees of merit.

In order to examine this important position, which is the foundation of a most elaborate theory, and from which the author draws conclusions deeply affecting the interests of society, we shall take the example of the *republic*, of which form we have had some opportunity of being acquainted with the nature and character, from the preceding short sketch of the history of the Grecian commonwealths.

The ingenious author of an Essay on the History of Civil Society* thus enlarges on the idea of M. Montesquieu:—"In democracy," says he, "men must love equality; they must respect the rights of their fellow-citizens; they must unite by the common ties of affection to the state. In forming personal pretensions, they must be satisfied with that degree of consideration which they can procure by their abilities fairly measured with those of an opponent. They must labour for the public without hope of profit. They must reject every attempt to create a personal dependence. Candour, force and elevation of mind, in short, are the props of democracy, and virtue is the principle required

* Dr. Adam Fergusson.

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to its preservation." A beautiful picture—a state indeed of consummate perfection! But the author proceeds:—"How ardently should mankind wish for the form, if it tended to establish the principle, or were in every instance a sure indication of its presence! But perhaps we must have possessed the principle, in order, with any hopes of advantage, to receive the form." The last sentence is a fair and just conclusion, which needed not the cautious form in which it is expressed. The author plainly intimates his own opinion, in which every thinking mind will agree with him, that this beautiful picture, which he has drawn correctly after the sketch of Montesquieu, is nothing better than an Utopian theory; a splendid chimera, descriptive of a state of society that never did, and never could exist; a republic not of men, but of angels.

For where, it may be asked, was that democracy ever found on earth, where, in the words of this description, men loved equality; were satisfied with the degree of consideration they could procure by their abilities fairly measured with those of an opponent (a circumstance in itself utterly destructive of equality), laboured for the public without hope of profit, and rejected every attempt to create a personal dependence? Did such a government ever exist, or, while society consists of human beings, is it possible that such ever should exist? While man is a being instigated by the love of power—a passion visible in an infant, and common to us even with the inferior animals—he will seek personal superiority in preference to

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every matter of a general concern; or at best, he will employ himself in advancing the public good, as the means of individual distinction and elevation; he will promote the interest of the state from the selfish but most useful passion of making himself considerable in that establishment which he labours to aggrandise.

Such is the true picture of man as a political agent. But let us not be understood, that what is here affirmed with regard to the community at large, is strictly true of every member who composes it. If we look in vain for disinterested patriotism in the aggregate of a people, it would be a rash and unjust conclusion to assert that no such virtue exists in the breasts of individuals. The same evidence of history which proves the truth of the one assertion, would suffice to disprove the other. The annals of the Greek and Roman states record examples of the most exalted patriotic virtue in a few distinguished characters, whose names have come down with honour to modern times, and are destined to survive to the latest posterity. But these examples afford in themselves a proof which fully confirms the general proposition. The admiration which those virtuous individuals excited while they lived, the lasting honours that attend their memory, demonstrate the singularity and rareness of that character, the difficulty of its attainment, and thence the distinguished honours which it claims, as approaching as near as possible to the *ideal perfection* of human nature.

Dissenting as I do from the notion of Montesquieu, that virtue is the principle of a democratic

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government, I am yet ready to allow (what may seem at first view paradoxical) that this form of government is the best adapted to produce, though not the most frequent, yet the most striking, examples of virtue in individuals. But why? Even for a reason the very opposite to the opinion of that ingenious writer. A democratic government opposes more impediments to disinterested patriotism than any other form. To surmount these, a pitch of virtue is necessary, which, in other situations, where the obstacles are less great and numerous, is not called into exertion. The nature of a republican government gives to every member of the state an equal right to cherish views of ambition, and to aspire to the highest offices of the commonwealth; it gives to every individual the same title with his fellows to aspire at the government of the whole. Where talents alone are sufficient to obtain weight and distinction, we may look for a display of ambition in all who have a high opinion of their own abilities. The number of candidates excites rivalships, contentions, and factions. The glorious names of liberty and patriotism are always found effectual to rouse and inflame the multitude; rarely indeed to blind them to the real character and views of the demagogue, but ever sufficient to be a mask for their own love of tumult and the hatred of their superiors. In such a state of society, how rare is genuine virtue; how singular the character of a truly disinterested patriot! He appears and he is treated as an impostor; he attempts to serve his country in its councils, or in offices; he is calumniated, reviled, and persecuted; he dies in dis-

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grace or in banishment; and the same envy which maligned him living, embalms him dead, and showers encomiums on his memory, to depress and mortify the few surviving imitators of his virtues. We have seen from the history of the Grecian states that a democracy has produced some splendid models of genuine patriotism in the fate of Aristides, Miltiades, and Cimon. We have seen the reward that attended that character under this form of government of which we are taught to believe that virtue is the principle.

In the science of politics, more than in any other, the greatest caution is necessary in the adoption of general positions. The theory of M. Montesquieu leads, apparently by fair induction, to a variety of consequences most deeply interesting to man, not only in his political, but in his moral capacity. How seriously ought those general propositions to be canvassed and scrutinised, from which their author has deduced such consequences as the following!—*That as in a democracy there is no occasion for the principle of honour, so in a monarchy virtue is not at all necessary; that under the latter government the state can subsist independently of the love of country, of the passion of true glory, and of every heroic virtue; that the laws supply the place of those virtues, and the state dispenses with them; that under a monarchy, a virtuous man ought not to hold office; that public employments ought to be venal*; and that crimes, if kept secret, are of no consequence†.* If, instead of theoretical speculation, we take his-

* Spirit of Laws, b. viii., c. 9.

† Spirit of Laws, b. iii., c. 5.



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tory for our guide, and thence form a fair estimate of the condition of the subject under all the different forms of the political machine, we shall be in no danger of having our reason blinded and abused by such absurd and pernicious chimeras, with whatever sophistry they are disguised to our understanding.

The history of the states of Greece exhibits in its earliest period a very general diffusion of the patriotic spirit, and the love of ingenuous freedom. Those virtuous feelings became gradually corrupted as the nation advanced in power and splendour. Selfish ambition, and the desire of rule in the commonwealth, came in place of the thirst for national glory; and at length the enthusiasm for freedom, which was at first the glowing character of the Grecian states, gave place to an enthusiasm of another kind, still of an ingenuous nature, though far less worthy in its aim,—an admiration of the fine arts, a passion for the objects of taste, and all those refinements which are the offspring of luxury.

Patriotism always exists in the greatest degree in rude nations, and in an early period of society. Like all other affections and passions, it operates with the greatest force where it meets with the greatest difficulties. It seems to be a virtue which grows from opposition; which subsists in its greatest vigour amidst turbulence and dangers; but in a state of ease and safety, as if wanting its appropriate nourishment, it languishes and decays. We must not then wonder at that difference of paternal character which distinguished the Greeks in the early ages of their history, from that by

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which they were known in their more advanced and more luxurious periods. It is a law of nature to which no experience has ever furnished an exception, that the rising grandeur and opulence of a nation must be balanced by the decline of its heroic virtues. When we find in the latter ages of the Grecian history, and in the declension of the Roman commonwealth and subsequent periods of the empire, no traces of that noble spirit of patriotism which excited our respect and admiration when they were infant and narrow establishments, it is not that the race of men had degenerated, or that the same soil and climate which formerly produced heroes could now only rear abject slaves and luxurious tyrants. Nature is still the same; and man comes the same from the hand of nature; but artificial causes have thrown him into that situation which affords no exercise to passions which once had their amplest scope and operation; which banishes virtue by diminishing its objects and annihilating its most substantial rewards; for wealth and ease and safety deny all exertion to heroic virtue; and in a society marked by these characteristics, such endowment can neither lead to power, to eminence, nor to fame.

Such was the situation of Greece; when, extending her conquests and importing both the wealth and the manners of foreign nations, she lost with her ancient poverty her ancient virtue. Venality and corruption pervaded every department of her states, and became the spring of all public measures, which, instead of tending to the national welfare, had for their only object the gratification of the selfish passions of individuals.



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Under these circumstances, it was no wonder that she should become an easy prey to a foreign power, which in fact rather purchased her in the market than subdued her by force of arms.

Yet Greece, thus degenerate and fallen from the proud eminence she once maintained, continued in some respects to hold a distinguished rank among the contemporary nations. Conquered as she was, she continued in one point of view to preserve a high superiority even over the power which had subdued and enslaved her. Her progress in letters and philosophy, and her unrivalled eminence in the arts, compensated in some degree the loss of her national liberties, and forced even from her conquerors an avowal of her superiority in every department of science and mental energy. The victors did not blush to become the scholars of the vanquished. The most eminent of the Roman orators perfected themselves in their art in the school of Athens. The Greek philosophy had for some ages its disciples in Italy; and from the golden era of the administration of Pericles at Athens, the Greeks furnished the models of all that is excellent in the arts of poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture.

We proceed, therefore, to take a short survey of the attainments of the Greeks in those departments of science and of art, beginning with an account of their extraordinary eminence in sculpture, painting, and architecture, in which they arrived at a pitch of perfection which has been the admiration and envy of all succeeding ages.

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## CHAPTER VII.

The Greeks not eminent in the Useful Arts—Commerce—Superiority in the Fine Arts—Greek Architecture—Gothic Architecture — Sculpture — Inferiority of the Moderns—Greek Religion favourable to Sculpture and Painting—Greek Painters.

It is not among the Greeks that we are to look for the greatest improvement in the useful or the necessary arts of life. When we speak of the eminence of this people in the arts, we are understood to mean those which, by distinction, are termed the fine arts, or those which mark the refinement of a people, and which come in the train of luxury. Agriculture, which deservedly holds the first rank among the useful arts of life, does not appear ever to have attained a remarkable degree of advancement among the Greeks *. At Sparta, this as well as other arts being confined to the slaves, it is not there that we are to look for any remarkable progress in those departments. With respect to Attica, the soil of that country was naturally barren: its best produce was the olive; and the Athenians the more readily confined themselves to that branch of husbandry, that it was little, if at all, attended to in any of the other states of Greece. That Attica produced

* Plato, de Legg. l. 7, and Aristotle, in his Politic. l. 8, c. 10, both explode the practice of agriculture by the freeborn citizens, and confine it to the slave.

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little or no grain is evident from this fact, mentioned by Demosthenes, that the Athenians imported annually 400,000 medimni of corn. The medimnus was somewhat more than four pecks of English measure.

Deficient as the Greeks seem to have been in agriculture, they are not much more considerable as a commercial people. Xenophon, indeed, in his treatise on the Public Revenue, advises his countrymen to spare no pains in advancing their commerce, and lays its down as a sound maxim, that the riches of individuals constitute the strength of a state: but such ideas were repugnant to the common notions of his countrymen, at least in the earlier periods of the republics. The laws of Lycurgus, we have seen, proscribed commerce, with all other arts, as tending to produce an inequality of wealth: nor did the system of Solon give any encouragement to trade. Notwithstanding these impediments, however, from the time when the Greeks had seen and tasted the Asiatic luxuries, from the era of the invasion of Xerxes, the Athenians began to cultivate commerce with considerable assiduity. Corinth, we know, and the Greek colony of Syracuse, became from that source extremely opulent. They navigated the Mediterranean in large vessels, capable of containing 200 men; and in the age of Alexander we have seen a voyage performed, of ten months' duration, in sailing from the mouth of the Indus to Susa, in the farther extremity of the Persian Gulf.

But these were not the arts for which Greece was ever remarkable among the nations of anti-

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quity. We must now speak of those for which she was eminently distinguished; in which she surpassed all the contemporary states, and of which the remaining monuments are at this day the models of anxious imitation, and the confessed standard of excellence in the judgment of the most polished nations of modern times. I speak of what are termed the *fine arts*, in all of which, architecture, sculpture, painting, and music, the Greeks were superlatively excellent.

After the defeat of Xerxes, the Greeks, secure for some time from foreign invaders, and in full possession of their liberty, achieved with distinguished glory, may certainly be considered as at the summit of their grandeur as a nation. They maintained for a considerable time their power and independence, and distinguished themselves during that period by an universality of genius unknown to other ages and nations. The fine arts bear a near affinity to each other; and it has seldom been known in any age which produced or encouraged artists in one department, that there were wanting others who displayed similar excellence in the rest. Of this, both ancient and modern history afford ample proof, in the ages of Pericles, of Leo X., and of Louis XIV. The arts broke out at once with prodigious lustre at Athens, under the luxurious administration of Pericles. In architecture and sculpture, Phidias at that time distinguished himself by such superior ability, that his works were regarded as wonders by the ancients, so long as any knowledge or taste remained among them. His brother Panæus (or Panænas) was an able assistant in some of his

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noblest works, and is himself distinguished as the artist who painted the famous picture in the Pœcile at Athens, representing the battle of Marathon, which is described by Pausanias and Pliny as so perfect a picture, that it presented striking portraits of the leaders on both sides. It was from the designs of Phidias that many of the noblest buildings of Athens were reared; and from the example of these, a just and excellent taste in architecture soon diffused itself over all Greece. Phidias had many disciples; and after his time arose a succession of eminent architects, sculptors, and painters, who maintained those sister arts in high perfection for above a century, till after the death of Alexander the Great. This, therefore, may be termed the golden age of the arts in Greece; while in those departments the contemporary nations were yet in the rudest ignorance. We shall afterwards see what reason there is to believe that the Etruscans were an exception from this observation: but it is certain that whatever were their attainments in the fine arts in those remote ages, their successors the Romans inherited none of that knowledge from them; for at the period of the conquest of Greece, the Romans had not a tincture of taste in those arts, till they caught the infection from the precious spoils which the sole love of plunder then imported into Italy. But of this change operated on the taste and manners of the Romans, we shall in its proper place treat more at large. It is sufficient here to observe, that even when time had brought the arts to the highest perfection they ever attained among the Romans, this people never ceased to

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acknowledge the high superiority of the Greeks, of which we have this convincing proof, that when the Roman authors celebrate any exquisite production of art, it is ever the work of a Phidias, Praxiteles, Lysippus, Glycon, Zeuxis, Apelles, Parrhasius, or, in fine, of some artist who adorned that splendid period, and not of those who had worked at Rome, or who had lived nearer to their own times than the age of Alexander the Great.

The Greeks are universally acknowledged as the parents of architecture, or at least of that peculiar style of which all after ages have confessed the superior excellence. The Grecian architecture consisted of three different manners, or what artists have termed the three distinct orders; the *Doric*, *Ionic* and *Corinthian*. The Doric was probably the first regular order among the Greeks. It has a masculine grandeur, and a superior air of strength to both the others. It is, therefore, the best adapted to works where magnitude and sublimity are the principal objects. Some of the most ancient temples of Greece were of this order, particularly that of Theseus at Athens, built ten years after the battle of Marathon, that is 481 years before the Christian era; a fabric which has stood 2260 years, and is at this day almost entire.

One observation may here be made which is applicable to all the works of taste. The character of sublimity is chaste and simple. In the arts dependent on design, if the artist aim at this character, he must disregard all trivial decorations; nor must the eye be distracted by a multiplicity of parts. In architecture, there must be few divisions

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in the principal members of the building, and the parts must be large and of ample relief. There must be a modesty of decoration, contemning all minuteness of ornament, which distracts the eye, that ought to be filled with the general mass, and with the proportions of the greater parts to each other. In this respect the Doric is confessedly superior to allthe other orders of architecture, as it unites strength and majesty with a becoming simplicity, and the utmost symmetry of proportions.

As the *beautiful* is more congenial to some tastes than the *sublime*, the lightness and elegance of the Ionic order will, perhaps, find more admirers than the chastened severity of the Doric. The latter has been compared to the robust and muscular proportions of a man, while the former has been likened to the finer, more slender and delicate proportions of a woman. Yet the character of this order is likewise simplicity, which is as essential a requisite to true beauty as it is to grandeur and sublimity. But the simplicity of beauty is not inconsistent with that degree of ornament which would derogate from the simplicity of the sublime. The Ionic admits with propriety of decorations which would be unsuitable to the Doric. The volute of the Ionic capital, frequently ornamented with foliage, the entablature consisting of more parts, and often decorated with sculpture in *basso*, and even *alto relievo ;* all these have a propriety in this order of architecture, which is quite agreeable to its character. Of this order were constructed some of the noblest of the Greek temples; particularly the temple of Apollo at

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Miletus, that of the Delphic oracle, and the superb temple of Diana at Ephesus, classed among the wonders of the world.

The last of the Grecian orders of architecture is the Corinthian. It marks a period of luxury and magnificence, when pomp and splendour had become the predominant passion, but had not so far prevailed as to extinguish the taste for the sublime and beautiful. It had its origin at Corinth, one of the most luxurious cities of Greece; and was, probably, the production of an artist who wished to strike out a novelty agreeable to the reigning affectation of splendour, and to preserve at the same time a grandeur and beauty of proportions; thus studying at once to captivate the vulgar eye, and to preserve the approbation of the critic. Of this order were built many of the most superb temples of Greece, particularly that of Jupiter Olympius at Athens, founded by Peisistratus, but not completely finished till seven hundred years after, under the reign of Hadrian. Its remains are yet very considerable. But pleasing as this magnificent order may be to the general taste, it will hold but an inferior estimation with those who possess a refined judgment. It conveys not to the chastened eye that calm and sober pleasure which arises from grand and simple symmetry, or the effect of a few striking parts united to produce one great and harmonious whole; but leads off the attention to admire the minute elegance of its divisions, and solicits applause less from the production of a great and beautiful effect, than from the consideration of the labour, the cost, and artifice employed in its construction.

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I have thus endeavoured to give some idea of the distinct characters of the three different orders of Grecian architecture. They have been elegantly and happily distinguished by the poet of the Seasons:—

> ——————First unadorn'd
> And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose;
> The Ionic then with decent matron grace
> Her airy pillar heav'd; luxuriant last,
> The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath.
> *Thomson's Liberty*, part ii.

The foregoing remarks, it must be observed, are applicable only to those orders such as we find them in the chastest models of antiquity. It is but too certain that affectation even among the ancients corrupted the general taste; and the caprice of artists aiming at novelty and singularity, often produced very faulty deviations from the distinct characters of each of those orders. The moderns, treading in their steps, have indulged a licence still more unbounded; and such have been the whimsical innovations of architects, that even from the professed treatises on the art, it is difficult to determine what are the pure and unadulterated models of the several orders; so that, had not time happily spared to us at this day some precious remnants of the genuine architecture of the Greeks in its purity, we must have in vain sought for it, either in the practice of architects, or in their writings.

While on the subject of architecture, which, in books that treat of the science, exhibits five distinct orders, it would be improper here to omit mentioning the other two, the Tuscan and the

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Composite, though of Italian origin; or to pass over entirely in silence a complete species of architecture, which, arising in times comparatively modern to those of which we now treat, seems to have borrowed nothing from those models of antiquity, but to depend on principles and rules peculiar to itself.

The *Tuscan* order is, as I have said, of Italian origin. The Etruscans, long before the era when Rome is supposed to have been founded, were a splendid, an opulent, and a highly polished people. Of this, the monuments at this day remaining of their works in sculpture and painting afford a convincing proof; for, not to mention the subjects of those paintings which exhibit all the refinements of social life, the very eminence which they evince in the art of design presupposes wealth, luxury, and high civilisation. It is true, those paintings are supposed to have been the work of Greek artists; but if those artists were encouraged by the Etruscans, and wrought for them, we must thence of necessity conclude that they were a most polished people. The Etruscan architecture appears to be nearly allied to the Grecian, but to possess an inferior degree of elegance. The more ancient buildings of Rome were probably of this species of architecture, though the proper Greek orders came afterwards to be in more general estimation. A respect, however, for antiquity prevented the Romans from ever entirely abandoning the Tuscan mode. The Trajan Pillar is of this order of architecture. This magnificent column has braved the injuries of time, and is entire at the present day. Its excellence consists

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less in the form and proportions of the pillar, than in the beautiful sculpture which decorates it. Of this fine sculpture, which represents the victories of Trajan over the Dacians, a very adequate idea may be formed, from the engravings of the *Columna Trajana* by Bartoli.

The Composite order, likewise of Italian extraction, was unknown in the age of the perfection of Greek architecture. Vitruvius makes no mention of it. It seems to have been the production of some conceited artist, who wanted to strike out something new in that way, or to evince his superiority to the ancient masters; but it serves only to show that the Greeks had exhausted all the principles of united grandeur and beauty in the three orders before mentioned, and to prove that it is not possible to frame a new order unless by combining and slightly varying the old.

The *Gothic* architecture, which is often found to produce a very striking effect, offers no contradiction to the observations I have made on the different orders of Grecian architecture. The effect produced by the Gothic architecture is not to be accounted for on the same principle of conformity to the rules of symmetry or harmony, in the proportions observed between the several parts; but depends on a certain idea of vastness, gloominess, and solemnity, which we know to be powerful ingredients in the *sublime*. Nothing is more common than to hear some pretended *cognoscenti* —who derive all their opinions from certain general laws of taste, which they want the capacity of applying to their proper subject, and have no guidance of a natural feeling to discern where they are inap-

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plicable—exclaim with great emphasis, that it is surprising that the Italians, who had before them so many precious monuments of the Greek architecture, should ever have given into a taste so barbarous as the Gothic; and this, perhaps, while they are gazing with vacancy of eye upon the cathedral of Milan, one of the noblest Gothic structures in the world. The truth is, the two species of architecture are so different, that no comparison can with justice be instituted between them. The object, indeed, of both is the same—to strike with pleasure, or with awe; but they employ means which are totally distinct, and both obtain their ends. I have observed that the sublime disregards all minuteness of ornament, which serves but to distract the eye. The Gothic architecture may be judged to offend in that particular; though it ought to be considered that in the best specimens of Gothic architecture, even where we find that minuteness of ornament, its effect is counterbalanced by the simplicity of the greater members of the fabric. The capital of a Gothic column, it is true, is crowded with a profusion of fantastic ornaments of men, beasts, birds, and plants; but that capital itself consists of few divisions; its column is of a magnitude that nobly fills the eye; the sudden elevation of the arch has something bold and aspiring; and while we contemplate the great and striking members of the building, the minuteness of ornament on its parts is but transiently remarked, or noticed only as a superficial decoration, which detracts nothing from the grand effect of the whole mass.

To return: the Greeks, of all the nations of

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antiquity, possessed an unrivalled excellence in the arts depending on design. Sculpture and painting were brought by them to as high a pitch of perfection as architecture. It is the peculiar advantage of the art of sculpture, that, being ordinarily employed on the most durable materials, and such as possess small intrinsic value, it bids the fairest of all the arts to eternise the fame of the artist. While its works resist all natural decay from time, they afford no temptation to alter their form, in which consists their only value. They may lie hid from neglect in an age of ignorance: but they are safe, though buried in the earth; and avarice or industry, to supply the demands of an after age of taste, will probably recover them. What precious remains of ancient sculpture have, in the last three centuries, been dug out of the ruins of Rome! What treasures may we suppose yet remain in Greece and in the rest of Italy! To the discovery of some of those remnants of ancient art has been attributed the revival of painting and sculpture, after their total extinction during the middle ages. This, at least, is certain, that, till Michael Angelo and Raffaelle, feeling the beauties of the antique, began to emulate their noble manner, and introduced into their works, the one a grandeur, and the other a beauty unknown to the age in which they lived, the manner of their predecessors had been harsh, constrained, and utterly deficient in grace. Michael Angelo was so smitten with the beauties of the antique, that he occupied himself in drawing numberless sketches of a mutilated trunk of a statue of Hercules, still to be seen at Rome, and from him called the *Torso*

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of Michael Angelo. Raffaelle, whose works have entitled him to the same epithet which the Greeks bestowed on Apelles, *the Divine*—Raffaelle confessed the excellence of the antique, by borrowing from it many of his noblest airs and attitudes; and his enemies (for merit will ever have its enemies) have asserted, that of those gems and basso-relievos which he had been at pains to collect and copy, he destroyed not a few, in order that the beauties he had thence borrowed might pass for his own. The practice of those artists, whose names are the first among the moderns, affords sufficient argument of the superiority of the ancients. Their works remain the highest models of the art; and we who, in the imitation of the human figure, have not nature, as they had, constantly before our eyes undisguised, and in her most graceful and sublimest aspects, can find no means so short and so sure to attain to excellence, as by imitating the antique.

Every artist should accustom his eye to the contemplation of the antique, before he begins to work after nature; for this reason, that the antique presents nature without her defects, offering the collected result of all her scattered beauties, and these even heightened by the imagination of the artist. The scholar who has thus made himself familiar with the antique, when he begins to imitate nature will immediately discern her striking beauties, which, had he not seen them in the antique, separated entirely from her blemishes, he might never have learnt from his own taste to separate in the objects of nature; and here, it may be remarked by the way, lies the difference between



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the Flemish and the Italian schools. The Flemings were ignorant of the antique, and some of them, as Rembrandt for example, held it in contempt. Nature was their prototype, which, it must be allowed, they have successfully imitated; but, wanting judgment to discern her striking beauties, or to separate them from her defects, and utterly unconscious of that ideal beauty which results from this judgment, and towers far above nature, they have produced nothing noble, nothing graceful, nothing truly great.

I have said that the ancients, in the imitation of the human figure, had nature constantly before their eyes in her most graceful and sublimest aspects. The games of Greece, where the youth contended naked in the Palæstra, afforded a noble school for the improvement of sculpture and painting. Their artists there saw the finest figures of Greece in all the possible variety of attitudes—an advantage which no modern academy of design can furnish. What is it that strikes the intellectual eye in the ancient Greek statues? It is a grandeur united with simplicity—an unaffected air of beauty or of dignity, which is the result of the artist's observation of nature unconstrained. The naked model in our academies of painting, who is desired to throw his body into such an attitude of exertion as the painter wishes to copy, will show that attitude much more constrained and unnatural than a gladiator, for instance, or a wrestler, who is thrown into it unconsciously by a natural effort in a real combat in the arena. Could the artist who cut the admirable figure of the Dying Gladiator in the Capitol, have copied the wonderfully

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simple and natural position of the limbs, the relaxing muscles, and failing strength; or the lineaments of the face, expressive of the utmost anguish, yet endured with manly fortitude; could the sculptor have copied all this from the model of a figure in the academy? It is utterly impossible; no artificial disposition of the body could give the smallest idea of it. It is this same statue of the Dying Gladiator of which Pliny speaks, and which he has so admirably characterised in a few words: "*Cresilas vulneratum deficientem fecit, in quo possit intelligi quantum restet animæ**."

In like manner, in the admirable group of Niobe and her children, believed by some to be the work of Praxiteles, and by others of Scopas†, the various attitudes there exhibited, though the most impassioned that can well be conceived, are yet altogether so natural, so simple, and unaffected, that they demonstrate the source from which they were drawn to have been nature itself, under the

* "With such admirable art was the statue of the Dying Gladiator sculptured by Cresilas, that one could judge how much of life remained."

† Praxiteles flourished 369 B. C. His merits, and an enumeration of his principal works in sculpture, may be found in Pliny, lib. 34, c. 8; and lib. 36, c. 5. He excelled chiefly in female beauty, and more particularly in the heads and arms of his figures, which were consummately graceful. The famous courtesan, Phryne, was the model for his Cnidian Venus, which is yet preserved, and known to the moderns by the name of the Venus de Medici. Scopas flourished 430 B. C. Many of his works are enumerated by Pliny, lib. xxxvi. c. 5; and it is sufficient argument of his talents to say that the best judges of antiquity deemed many of his statues equal to those of Praxiteles.



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actual influence of passions similar to what the sculptor has expressed. Even in those single statues unexpressive of passion, and where no particular action is represented, as in the Antinous and the little Apollo, there is an ease and freedom of attitude which convinces us at first sight that the sculptor was not the servile copyist of a figure planted before him and directed to throw his limbs into a proper position, as a model in the Academy. The sculptors of those statues drew from nature, but it was from nature unconstrained; it was that their eyes were familiarly acquainted with those attitudes; they saw them daily in their games and spectacles, and that habit of observation enabled them faithfully to represent them.

From this air of unrestrained nature, and particularly from that expression of calmness and of ease which is observable in many of the ancient statues, and which indicates the freedom of gesture of a person alone and unconscious of being observed, results that wonderful grace, which so few of the modern artists have attained the ability of expressing. Perhaps we may even doubt whether many of those artists have ever felt its excellence. To most modern artists and modern connoisseurs, the sedate grandeur, the simple and quiet attitude, appear lifeless and insipid. "The figure," they will tell you, "wants spirit: where is the air of the head? The limbs are carelessly disposed; they want attitude:" and the critic, to illustrate his meaning, will throw himself into a stage posture, or what are faithful copies of those postures, the paintings of the French school. Hogarth, in his *Analysis of Beauty*, has happily ridiculed this miserable

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taste, by representing a French dancing-master standing by the side of the beautiful figure of the *Antinous*, and teaching the awkward youth to hold up his head, and put on the air of a man of fashion. Such indeed are the fantastic innovations introduced by modern manners and fashion in disguising the human figure, that the sculptor or painter has no longer nature for his school of instruction, nor can any otherwise form a conception of her genuine and unsophisticated features than by contemplating them reflected in the precious works of the ancient masters.

Among the Greeks, Nature was not only seen without disguise, and in her noblest and most graceful attitudes; she was in reality in the human figure superior to what we now see in the ordinary race of men. Without indulging the whimsical hypothesis of some philosophers, that the moderns, compared with the ancients, are a degenerate breed, it may safely be asserted, that among the ancient Greeks, the youth, trained from infancy in the daily practice of gymnastic exercises, must have exhibited a finer form of body, a more perfect symmetry of limbs, and a shape more picturesque, than what must necessarily result from the constraint of the modern method of clothing, and the luxurious and comparatively effeminate system of modern education. The varied forms of manly beauty exhibited in the Pythian Apollo, the Antinous, and the Fighting Gladiator (if this statue be rightly so named), are evidently far beyond the model of the human figure as we see it in the present race of men; but we have every reason to believe that their prototypes were to be

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found in those ages to which we now refer, though doubtless we must at the same time make allowance for the genius of the artist, in exalting and improving even that excellent Nature which presented itself to his eyes. In contemplating the figure of the *Farnesian Hercules*, the work of Glycon, (what Horace, by an allowable metonymy, has termed the *invicti membra Glyconis**), and in considering the prodigious strength of the back and shoulders, and strongly-marked distinction of the muscles in the breast and arms, we are apt at first view to censure the form as exaggerated beyond all nature: but in this superficial judgment we forget what was that nature which the sculptor had for his model of imitation, and do not consider, that to personify a divinity whose characteristic attribute was strength, it was necessary that that nature, superior as it was, should be amplified and exalted by the imagination of the artist. Of this heightening of nature the Greek sculptors have given the noblest examples in the representation of their Gods: "Non vidit Phidias Jovem," says Seneca, "nec stetit ante oculos ejus Minerva: dignus tamen illâ arte animus et concepit Deos, et exhibuit†."

And this leads me to remark what must have been likewise another and a very powerful source of the advancement of the arts of design among the Greeks. The Grecian mythology furnished a

* "The limbs of the invincible Glycon," for the invincible limbs of his statue.

† "Phidias never saw Jupiter, nor did Minerva present herself to his eyes: but his mind, worthy of his art, both formed those divine conceptions and represented them."

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most ample source for the exercise of the genius of the painter and sculptor. The distinct and characteristic attributes of the several deities, their actions, and the poetical fables connected with their history, furnished an inexhaustible supply of sublime, beautiful, and highly pleasing subjects. We know, since the revival of the arts, how much those of painting and sculpture have been indebted to the Roman Catholic religion, which furnishes not only an abundant demand for the works of the artist, but supplies him with an endless variety of subjects in the lives of its numerous saints and martyrs. But in this respect at least the Roman Catholic religion must yield to that of Greece, that the painful and often shocking scenes which it presents for the pencil will bear no comparison with the varied, gay, and amusing pictures of the pagan mythology.

Of the ability of the Greeks in painting, we must speak with more diffidence than we have done of their superiority in sculpture. Of the latter, those admirable works yet remaining justify the highest encomium that can be bestowed upon them. Of the former, it would be unjust to form any estimate from those inconsiderable specimens supposed of Grecian painting which time has yet left undestroyed. The paintings discovered in Herculaneum, the celebrated picture of a marriage in the Aldobrandini collection, those found in the *Sepulchrum Nasonianum* at Rome, and other pieces enumerated by Dutens *, were

* As M. Dutens, in his amusing and instructive essay on the Discoveries attributed to the Moderns, has enumerated, it

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probably the work of Greek artists; for we have no evidence that the Romans ever carried any of the arts depending on design to much perfection. But with regard to the Greeks the case is very different. Their excellence in the art of painting is loudly proclaimed by all antiquity. Of their eminence in the kindred art of sculpture we are ourselves the judges. Now we cannot reasonably call in question the taste of those ancient authors who have written in praise of the paintings of the Greeks, when we find the same judgment which they have given upon the works of sculpture, confirmed by the universal assent of modern critics. If we find that Pliny is not guilty of exaggera-

is believed, all the existing remains of the genuine paintings of the ancients, it may afford satisfaction to readers of curiosity to see the complete catalogue as given by that author. "The ancient paintings still to be seen at Rome are, a reclining Venus at full length, in the palace of Barberini, the Aldobrandine nuptials, a Coriolanus in one of the cells of Titus' baths, and seven other pieces taken out of a vault at the foot of Mount Palatine, among which are a Satyr drinking out of a horn, and a landscape with figures, both of the utmost beauty. There are also a sacrificial piece consisting of three figures, and an Œdipus and a Sphinx, all of which formerly belonged to the tomb of Ovid. The pictures discovered at Herculaneum disclose beyond all others a happiness of design and boldness of expression that could proceed only from the hands of the most accomplished artists. The picture of Theseus vanquishing the Minotaur, that of the birth of Telephus, Chiron and Achilles, and Pan and Olympe, present innumerable beauties to all persons of discernment. There were found also in the ruins of that city four capital pictures, wherein beauty of design seems to vie with the most skilful management of the pencil, and which appear to be of an earlier date than those before spoken of."—*Dutens*, p. 370. [Some paintings of

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tion or censurable for false taste when he extols the noble group of *Laocoon and his sons* *, terming it "a work excelling all that the arts of painting and sculpture have ever produced," why should we suppose that he exaggerated, or that his taste was not equally just, when he celebrates the praises and critically characterises the different manners and distinct merits of Zeuxis†, Apelles, Aristides the Theban ‡, Parrhasius, Protogenes and Timanthes? Parrhasius seems to have been the

great spirit have, since our author wrote, been discovered at Pompeii; but these were only the *furniture-pictures*, so to speak, of a private residence in a provincial town.]

* "Sicut in Laocoonte, qui est in Titi Imperatoris domo, opus omnibus et picturæ et statuariæ artis præferendum, ex uno lapide eum et liberos draconumque mirabiles nexus de consilii sententia fecere summi artifices Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii."—*Plin.* l. xxxvi. c. 5.

† Zeuxis flourished 397 B.C. The ancient authors are very high in their praises of the works of this great painter. He was peculiarly excellent in painting female beauty. Dionysius of Halicarnassus informs us, that the people of Crotona, wanting him to paint a naked Helen, sent him five of the most beautiful young women of their city, whose separate perfections he united in his picture, and produced a miracle of beauty. Cicero gives the story at large, and *con amore*. He tells us that Zeuxis was brought to the Palæstra and shown a great number of the most beautiful boys. "These," said his conductors, "have as many sisters, whose beauty you may easily guess from what you now see." "Nay, but," said Zeuxis, "send me the young women." The Crotonians held a public council on that request, and it was agreed to furnish him with what he demanded.—*Cic. de Invent. Rhet.* l. 2.

‡ Aristides flourished in the age of Alexander the Great, and was contemporary with Apelles, Parrhasius, and Timanthes. Pliny says of Aristides, that his paintings were the first which gave the expression of the soul and

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Correggio of antiquity; his talent, the pleasing, elegant, and rounded contour. Pliny, (lib. 35, c. 10,) in characterising the paintings of this artist, commends chiefly in his figures the *argutias vultus, elegantiam capilli, et venustatem oris**, and highly praises the correctness of his outline. The same writer mentions an allegorical painting of Parrhasius, representative of the character of the Athenians, in which the artist seems to have formed a just idea of that inconstant and fickle populace. "*Pinxit et Demon Atheniensium, argumento quoque ingenioso: volebat namque varium, iracundum, injustum, inconstantem—eundem exorabilem, clementem, misericordem, excelsum, gloriosum, humilem, ferocem, fugacemque, et omnia pariter ostendere*†." It were to be wished that Pliny had given us some clearer idea of the com-

the feeling: and as an instance, he mentions a celebrated picture of Aristides, in which, in a besieged city, a mother is represented dying of a wound in her breast, and holding back her child lest it should suck blood instead of milk; a picture which is supposed to be the subject of a beautiful epigram in the Anthologia, thus happily translated by Webb, in his Beauties of Painting:—

"Suck, little wretch, while yet thy mother lives,
Suck the last drop her fainting bosom gives:
She dies; her tenderness survives her breath,
And her fond love is provident in death."

* "The arch expression, the beauty of the hair, and charm of the mouth."

† "He painted also an ingenious allegorical picture of the Genius of the Athenians, representing a being at one and the same time fickle, irascible, unjust, inconstant yet placable and compassionate, vainglorious yet humble, ferocious yet cowardly."

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position of a picture so extraordinary in point of subject.

If Parrhasius was the Correggio, Apelles was indisputably the Raffaelle of antiquity: "*Omnes prius genitos, futurosque postea superavit Apelles**," are the words of Pliny, who, in his estimates of the works of art, is generally supposed to speak less from his own taste than from the common opinion of the best judges of antiquity. The peculiar excellence of Apelles, as of Raffaelle, lay in that consummate gracefulness of air which he imparted to his figures, and in which he surpassed all his rivals in the arts. "*Præcipua Apellis in arte venustas fuit, cum eâdem ætate maximi pictores essent; quorum opera quum admiraretur, collaudatis omnibus, deesse iis unam illam venerem dicebat quam Græci* Χάριτα *vocant: cætera omnia contigisse, sed hac soli sibi neminem parem* †."—Plin. 1. 35. c. 10. It is well known that Alexander the Great had the highest esteem for this artist; and having employed him to paint his mistress Campaspe, showed a singular example of generosity and self command in bestowing her as a gift on his friend the painter, who had fallen in love with his beautiful model. It was a high testimony to the merits of the artists, but it was

* "Apelles surpassed all who had gone before, and all who will ever come after him."

† "In the grace of his pictures Apelles surpassed all the great painters of his age: whatever praise was bestowed on their works, still that peculiar beauty which the Greeks term Χάριτα (Grace) was wanting; in the other qualities of his art others may have attained equal perfection, but in this he was unrivalled."

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at the same time a judicious policy for himself, that Alexander would suffer no other painter, statuary, or engraver to form his effigy, than Apelles, Lysippus, and Pyrgoteles; a fact which accounts for the singular beauty and excellence of all the figures yet remaining of that prince.

To the merits of Protogenes, a critic of genuine taste among the ancients has borne a high testimony: I speak of Petronius Arbiter. That author, mentioning his having seen in the palace of Trimalchio (Nero) some sketches by the hand of Protogenes, says, that on handling them he felt a reverential awe, as if they had been something more than human*. It was to the high excellence of Protogenes as an artist, that the city of Rhodes, the place of his nativity, owed its preservation when besieged by Demetrius Poliorcetes. When that prince saw no other means of reducing the city than by setting it on fire in a particular quarter, in which there was a celebrated painting of Protogenes, he chose rather to abandon the enterprise than hazard the destruction of what was, in his opinion, of the highest value.

On the whole, if we have not the same demonstrative evidence of the attainments of the Greeks in painting that we have of their eminence in

* In pinacothecam perveni vario genere tabularum mirabilem; nam et Zeuxidos manus vidi, nondum vetustatis injuria victas: et Protogenis rudimenta cum ipsius naturæ veritate certantia, non sine quodam horrore tractavi. Jam vero Apellis quam Græci *monocnemon* appellant, etiam adoravi. Tanta enim subtilitate extremitates imaginum erant ad similitudinem præcisæ, ut crederes etiam animorum esse picturam.—Pet. Arb. Satyr.

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sculpture, namely, the existing monuments of the art, we have every degree of presumptive evidence which the subject can admit to warrant an opinion of an equal degree of excellence. These arts require the same talents, their progress is influenced by the same moral causes, they owe their advancement to the same taste and genius; and it is impossible to suppose the one to have been successfully cultivated in any age or nation, while the other remained in a rude and imperfect state*.

If any apology were necessary for the length of the preceding observations on the state of the arts in Greece, I would remark, that as it is the province of history to exhibit the character and genius of nations, so the national character of the Greeks was in nothing more signally displayed than in those branches of art to which I have called the reader's attention in this chapter. In tracing the mutual relation of moral and political causes, this peculiar genius of the Greek will be found to have extended its influence to the revolutions of their states, and to their fate as a nation. Its advancement marked the decline of the severer morals and the fall of the martial spirit; for the fine arts cannot exist in splendour, but in a soil of luxury and of ease. The taste for these supplanted the

* For a most ample account of the ancient painters, sculptors and architects, drawn from the writings of the Greek and Roman authors, the reader is referred to the learned work of *Junius de Picturâ Veterum*, and the catalogue of artists subjoined to that work. See likewise a very ingenious and learned Dissertation on the Painting of the Ancients, by T. Cooper, Esq. in the third volume of Memoirs of the Lit. and Phil. Soc. of Manchester.

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appetite for national glory, and at length ignominiously supplied the place of public virtue. The degenerate Greeks were consoled for the loss of their liberty by the flattering distinction of being the humanisers of their conquerors, the *magistri et arbitri elegantiarum* to the unpolished Romans.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Public Games of Greece—Effects on Character—Manners—Poetical Composition anterior to Prose—Homer—Hesiod—Archilochus—Terpander—Sappho—Pindar—Anacreon—The Greek Epigram—The Greek Comedy, distinguished into the old, the middle, and the new—Aristophanes—Menander—Greek Tragedy—Æschylus—Euripides—Sophocles—Mode of Dramatic Representation—The ancient Drama set to Music—The Mimes and Pantomimes—Of the Greek Historians—Herodotus—Thucydides—Xenophon—Polybius—Diodorus Siculus—Dionysius of Halicarnassus—Arrian—Plutarch.

UNDER the early part of the Grecian history, we had occasion to treat of the origin, and somewhat of the nature, of the public games of Greece. Among all nations, in that period of society when war is not reduced to a science, but every battle is a multitude of single combats, we find those exercises in frequent use which tend to increase the bodily strength and activity. The Greeks, however, seem to have been the first who reduced the athletic exercises to a system, and considered them as an object of general attention and importance. The Panathenæan, and afterwards the Olympic, the Pythian, the Nemæan, and the Isthmian games were under the sanction of the laws, and subject to the regulations laid down by the ablest statesmen and legislators. They were

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resorted to not only by the citizens of all the states of Greece, but even by the neighbouring nations. Thus not only was a spirit of union and good understanding kept up between the several states, which, in spite of their frequent dissensions and hostilities, made them always regard each other as countrymen, and unite cordially against a common enemy; but this partial intercourse which the games produced with the inhabitants of other countries induced an acquaintance with their manners and genius, and contributed very early to polish away the rust of barbarism. In those games, therefore, we may see the cause of two opposite effects: that Greece, in the early period of her history, was distinguished for martial ardour and military prowess; and that, in the latter ages, elegance, politeness, and refinement were her predominant characteristics.

This passion of the Greeks for shows and games, extremely laudable, and even beneficial, when confined within due bounds, was carried, at length, to a most blamable and pernicious excess. The victor in the Olympic games, who had gained the first prize at running, wrestling, or driving a chariot, was crowned with higher honours than the general who had gained a decisive battle. His praises were sung by the poets; he had statues, and even temples, dedicated to his name. Cicero remarks, that among the Greeks it was accounted more glorious to carry off the palm at the Olympic games, than among the Romans to have obtained the honours of a triumph*. Of

* Propè majus et gloriosius quam Romæ triumphâsse.—*Ac. Orat. pro Flacco.*

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these nations, it was easy to foretell which was doomed to be the master, and which the slave.

The games of Greece were not exclusively appropriated to gymnastic and athletic exercises. Those immense assemblies were the resort, likewise, of the poets, the historians, the rhapsodists, and even the philosophers.

It is a singular fact, that in all nations there have been poets before there were writers in prose. The most ancient prose writers among the Greeks, of whom we have any mention, Pherecydes of Scyros, and Cadmus of Miletus, were posterior above 350 years to Homer. Of those poets who preceded Homer, some of whom are supposed to have been anterior to the Trojan war, as Linus and Orpheus, we have no remains*.

Homer, of whose birth both the place and the era are very uncertain, is, according to the most probable opinion, believed to have been a native of Ionia, and to have flourished 277 years after the taking of Troy; that is, 970 years before the birth of Christ. This illustrious man, the father of poetry, was, probably, a wandering minstrel, who earned his subsistence by strolling from one city to another, and frequenting public festivals and the tables of

* Linus is feigned to have been the son of Apollo, and is said to have been the first lyric poet. Stobæus gives some verses under the name of Linus; but they are believed not to authentic. The fragments published under the name of Orpheus, in the *Poetæ minores Græci*, and other collections, are plainly supposititious, and have not even the air of remote antiquity. The poem of the Argonauts, which is attributed to him, is, on the authority of Stobæus and Suidas, the work of Onomacritus, who lived in the time of Peisistratus. *See* Suidæ Lex. *sub voce* ORPHEUS.



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the great, where his music and verses procured him a welcome reception. Lycurgus, the Spartan lawgiver, is said to have been the first who brought from Ionia into Greece complete copies of the Iliad and Odyssey; which, however, were not arranged in the order in which we now see them, till 250 years afterwards, by Peisistratus, tyrant of Athens. The method which he took to collect those poems, by offering rewards to all who could recite, or produce in writing, any of the compositions of Homer, renders it probable that those poems had originally been composed in detached ballads, or rhapsodies *. From these various recitations, which were carefully transcribed, Peisistratus caused certain learned men of his court to prepare what they considered the most perfect copies, and to methodise the whole into regular poems, as we now find the Iliad and Odyssey. The division of each poem into twenty-four books is supposed to have been a later operation, as none of the classic authors quote Homer by books.

The poems of the Iliad and Odyssey were again revised by Callisthenes and Anaxarchus, at the command of Alexander the Great, who, it is well known, held them in the highest esteem. They were finally revised by the celebrated grammarian and critic, Aristarchus, by order of Ptolemy Philometor, and this last corrected copy is supposed to be the exemplar of all the subsequent editions. But the genuine merits of Homer are independent of all artificial arrangement. His

* A passage of Athenæus confirms this notion. He tells us that the rehearsers of detached ballads, or Ραψῳδοι, were called Ὁμηρσίσται.—*Ath. Deip.* l. xiv.

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profound knowledge of human nature—his masterly skill in the delineation of character—his extensive acquaintance with the manners, the arts, and attainments of those early ages—his command of the passions—his genius for the sublime, and the melody of his poetical numbers, have deservedly established his reputation as the greatest poet of antiquity. It has been justly remarked, that from the poems of Homer, as from the fountain of knowledge, the principal authors among the ancients have derived useful information in almost every department, moral, political, and scientific*.

Although the subjects of the Iliad and Odyssey appear of great amplitude and extent, the action of both poems is, in reality, comprehended within a very short space of time. The action of the Iliad does not occupy many days. The indignation of Achilles upon the insult received from Agamemnon forms the subject of the poem. Achilles retires to his tent in deep resentment. His absence dispirits the Greeks, and gives fresh courage to the Trojans, who gained some considerable advantages, and are occupied in burning the Grecian fleet, when Patroclus comes forth, in the armour of his friend Achilles, to stimulate the valour of his countrymen. He is slain by the hand of Hector; an event which rouses Achilles from his sullen repose, who signally revenges the

*Adjice Mæonidem; a quo ceu fonte perenni,
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.—*Ovid.*

And not only the poets, but, as Longinus informs us, the historians and philosophers drew largely from his copious source.



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fate of his friend by the death of the magnanimous Hector. He then celebrates the obsequies of Patroclus, and delivers up to Priam for a ransom the body of his brave son. This is in brief the whole action of the Iliad.

The structure of the Odyssey, of which the principal action is included in a period of time equally short, is more various and artful than that of the Iliad. Ulysses had been absent many years from his country, after the taking of Troy. His death was supposed certain; and Penelope, harassed by the importunate addresses of many suitors, could no longer invent plausible pretexts for delaying her choice of a second husband. At this crisis, the action of the Odyssey commences. Telemachus, the son of Ulysses, goes to Greece to interrogate Nestor regarding the fate of his father; and during his absence, Ulysses, having left the island of Calypso, is thrown by a tempest on the island of the Pheæcians in the neighbourhood of Ithaca. Here he recites his various adventures, and obtains assistance from the prince of the country, for the recovery of his native possessions, now occupied and pillaged by the insolent suitors of his queen. He arrives in Ithaca, discovers himself to his son, and takes jointly with him effectual measures to accomplish his revenge, and extirpate these presumptuous ravagers. The whole action of the poem is comprised in forty days. The moral of the Iliad is, that dissension among the chiefs of a country is generally fatal to the people; and that of the Odyssey, that prudence joined to courage and perseverance are sufficient to surmount the most powerful obstacles.

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The authenticity of the historical facts recorded by Homer has been much controverted. Even the war of the Greeks against Troy, and its ultimate issue in the destruction of that city, have been altogether doubted; and there are writers, of some name, who deny that Troy was ever taken by the Greeks—nay, that any such city as Troy ever had an existence. To this notion some countenance is derived from the circumstance that no vestige of a city is now to be found in the place of its supposed situation. But the universal belief of antiquity, and constant reference of the best informed of the ancient writers to the general events of the Trojan war, and the facts connected with that belief in the authentic history of ancient Greece and Rome, seem to afford, at least, a much stronger presumption of veracity to the general opinion than to its contrary. Were it to be an established rule, that everything should be retrenched from the annals of nations for which we have not the most complete and irrefragable evidence, the body of ancient history would suffer indeed a great abridgment.

As the Ionic was the native dialect of Homer, so it is that which he has chiefly employed, though not exclusively, availing himself occasionally of the Attic, the Doric, and the Æolic, as well as of the general licence of the poetic. Hence that variety in the rhythm and melody of his composition, which never palls upon the ear; and hence, likewise, the happy coincidence of sound and sense, which seems in him to have been less the result of study and artifice, than

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of a musical ear, which instinctively prompted the most appropriate expression, to give the greatest possible effect to the thought or idea to be conveyed.

Besides the great works of the Iliad and Odyssey, the ludicrous poem of the *Batrachomyomachia*, or Battle of the Frogs and Mice, has been generally ascribed to Homer; and likewise a pretty numerous collection of hymns in honour of Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and the other divinities of his country. Of all these, however, the authenticity is questionable; though they have been cited as genuine by Thucydides, Lucian, Pausanias, and others among the ancient writers, and are in themselves of sufficient merit to give no discountenance to the common belief. The *Margites*, an undoubted work of Homer, of a comic nature, of which no remnant is preserved, is likewise cited by Aristotle and the ancient writers as a composition worthy of its author.

Contemporary with Homer, or but a few years posterior to him, was Hesiod; a poet who seems to be more indebted for any share of esteem which he holds with the moderns, to his remote antiquity, and to the praises he has received from ancient writers*, than to any feeling of the real merit of his compositions. That Virgil highly esteemed Hesiod as a poet, is evident from the many imitations of the Greek author which occur in the first and second books of the Georgics:

* Hesiodus—vir perelegantis ingenii, et mollissima dulcedine carminum memorabilis.—*Vell. Paterc.* lib. i.

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nor is it, perhaps, a rash supposition, that Virgil had conceived the entire idea of his didactic poem on Agriculture, from the *Works and Days* of Hesiod. In two passages of the Eclogues, Virgil alludes to Hesiod with encomium :—

> ——— et quis fuit alter
> Descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
> Tempora quæ messor, quæ curvus arator haberet*?
> *Ecl.* iii.

And, as the highest compliment to his friend Gallus, after introducing him to Apollo and the Muses, he makes the Heliconian maids present him, by the hand of Linus, with the same pipe which they had formerly bestowed upon Hesiod, the Ascræan old man.

> —— hos tibi dant calamos en accipe, musæ
> Ascræo quos ante seni; quibus ille solebat
> Cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos†.
> *Ecl.* vi.

Of the authentic writings of Hesiod two entire works remain; the poem of *The Works and Days*, and *The Theogony*. The poem of the Works and Days, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, consists of two books: the first commences with the fables of Prometheus, Epimetheus, and Pandora, the Five Ages of the

* "And the other—he who first indicated the divisions of the earth into different nations and peoples, and taught the husbandman the seasons of harvest and seed-time."

† "Take it, then—the Muses assign to you this pipe, formerly conferred by them on the Ascræan sage, with which he was wont to charm even the obdurate elms from their mountains."

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World, the Golden, Silver, Brazen, Heroic, and Iron Ages; the poet proceeds to give an ample encomium on virtue, enforced by the consideration of the temporal blessings with which its practice is attended, and the punishment which awaits vice even in this world; and he thence eloquently enlarges on the chief moral duties essential to the conduct of life. In the second book, the poet lays down a series of precepts in agriculture, and details the various occupations of the husbandman at the different seasons of the year; he thence digresses to the proper seasons for navigation; lays down judicious maxims for domestic life in the choice of a wife, friends, companions, &c.; and concludes with enforcing the duties of religion, and a strict regard to good morals, and a general purity of conduct.

The poem of *The Theogony* contains a genealogy of the greater and lesser deities and deified heroes of antiquity; with the mythology or fabulous history connected with the religion of ancient Greece. This poem is the original source from which all the subsequent Greek and Roman mythologists have derived their accounts of the birth, parentage, and exploits of the heathen divinities, and the details of those fables which supply the place of authentic history in those ages properly termed the Heroic.

About two centuries posterior to the age of Homer and of Hesiod, flourished Archilochus, the inventor of Iambic verse—a poet whose depravity of morals entailed contempt and infamy on him during life; but whose works, after his death,

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divided, as we are told, the public estimation with those of Homer. Yet as these works were of the lyric kind, it is not possible they could admit of a degree of merit which could at all stand in competition with those noble pictures of life and manners which are delineated by that prince of poets. Some fragments of Archilochus are preserved by Athenæus, lib. xiv.; by Pausanias, lib. x.; and by Stobæus, serm. 123. Contemporary with Archilochus was Terpander, a native of Lesbos, who is celebrated no less for his lyrical compositions, than for his exquisite talents as a musician. Of his verses we have no remains*. The two succeeding centuries were distinguished by nine lyric poets of great celebrity: Alcmann and Stesichorus, of whom we have a few imperfect remains preserved by Athenæus, Stobæus, &c.; Sappho, of whom we have two beautiful odes; Alcæus, Simonides, Ibycus, and Bacchylides, of whom there remain considerable fragments in a mutilated state; and Pindar and Anacreon, of whom so much is preserved as to enable us to form a just estimate of their merits.

Pindar, in the judgment of the ancients, was esteemed the chief of all the lyric poets. We have of his composition four books of odes, or triumphal eulogies of the victors in the Olympic,

* Plutarch informs us that Terpander was the inventor of those melodies or musical strains in which it was customary to recite the poetical compositions in the public games or contests for the palm of poetry; and that in particular he sung to strains of his own composition the poems of Homer, as well as his own.

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Pythian, Nemæan, and Isthmian Games of Greece. It required a great power of poetical imagination to give variety and interest to a theme of so limited a nature, through a succession of no less than forty-five panegyrics; and without doubt the poet has displayed unbounded imagination, and the most excursive fancy. It is, however, to be suspected that the high admiration expressed by any modern for the compositions of Pindar, has either in it a considerable tincture of affectation, or is the result of a blind assent to the opinion of Horace, and others of the ancient writers, who have extolled the Theban bard as beyond all reach of competition, or even imitation. The sober critics of antiquity, in judging of his merits, have not shown the same indiscriminating enthusiasm. Longinus confesses that Pindar, with all his sublimity, is apt to sink below mediocrity, and that his fire is sometimes altogether extinguished when we least expect it: and Aulus Gellius gives it as the general opinion that the poetry of Pindar is florid and turgid to excess*. Yet we can discern in him many striking figures, great energy of expression, and often the most harmonious numbers.

Anacreon is a great contrast to Pindar. His fancy, which has no great range, is employed only in suggesting familiar and luxurious pictures. He has no comprehension of the sublime of poetry, and little of the tender, delicate, or ingenious in sentiment. He is a professed volup-

* Noct. Att., l. xvii. c. 10.

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tuary, of loose and abandoned principles; and his compositions, though easy, graceful, and harmonious, are too immoral to find favour with the friends of virtue.

Of the Greek lyric poetry, if the epigram may be classed under that denomination, the collection called *Anthologia* has preserved a great many very beautiful specimens. With a few exceptions, they are free from that coarseness and obscenity which disgrace the compositions of the Roman epigrammatists, particularly Martial and Catullus. The Anthologia was compiled by a monk of the fourteenth century; but it consists almost entirely of ancient productions, and is altogether a valuable monument of the Greek literature and taste. The best of the modern epigrams may be traced up to that source, and the English and French poets have frequently plundered the Anthologia without the least acknowledgment*.

Considering the Anthologia as affording the best examples of this species of composition, we may thence observe that the ancients did not altogether annex the same meaning that we do to the term epigram; which we consider as always displaying a point or witticism, consisting of a single thought, briefly and brilliantly expressed. The ancients required likewise brevity and unity of thought, but they did not consider point or witticism as

* It is no inconsiderable testimony to the merits of the Greek epigram, that the great moralist, Dr. Samuel Johnson, sought a relief from the pains attendant on his death-bed, in translating into English and Latin verse some of the best epigrams of the Anthologia.

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essential to epigram. Martial and Catullus are frequently witty: but the principal characteristic of the Greek epigram is ingenuity and simplicity, or what the French term *naïveté*.

The era of dramatic composition among the Greeks is supposed to have commenced about 590 B. C.* Thespis, who is said to have been the inventor of tragedy †, was contemporary with Solon; and if the drama originated with the Athenians, it is equally certain that they brought it to a very high pitch of perfection. The Greek comedy has been divided into three distinct classes, the *old*, the *middle*, and the *new*. Of the old

* Aristotle considers Homer as the founder of the drama among the Greeks—not as having himself written any composition strictly of a dramatic nature, but as having led the way to it, by his lively representations of life and manners, both in the more serious and graver aspects, and in the comic; his Iliad and Odyssey bearing the same relation to tragedy, that his *Margites* does to comedy.—*Arist. de Poet.* c. 4.

† Mr. Harris thus plausibly accounts for the priority of tragedy to comedy in the poetry of all nations. "It appears, that not only in Greece, but in other countries more barbarous, the first writings were in metre, and of an epic cast, recording wars, battles, heroes, ghosts; the marvellous always, and often the incredible. Men seemed to have thought the higher they soared, the more important they should appear; and that the common life which they then lived was a thing too contemptible to merit imitation. Hence it followed, that it was not till this common life was rendered respectable by more refined and polished manners, that men thought it might be copied, so as to gain them applause. Even in Greece itself, tragedy had attained its maturity many years before comedy, as may be seen by comparing the age of Sophocles and Euripides, with that of Philemon and Menander."

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comedy, which is noted for the extreme freedom and severity of its satire, the principal dramatists were Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes.

> Eupolis atque Cratinus, Aristophanesque poetæ,
> Atque alii quorum Comœdia prisca virorum est,
> Siquis erat dignus describi, quod malus ac fur,
> Quod mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui
> Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant*.
>
> *Hor. Sat.* lib. i. sat. 4.

And it had been well if their satire had been confined to the vicious alone, and notoriously profligate. We might excuse, when such were the sole objects of castigation, even the unbridled licence with which they wielded the iron scourge of sarcasm. Unfortunately their censure was not so discriminating, as appears by the dramas of Aristophanes, yet preserved entire.

If it be true, that under the administration of Pericles at Athens, all compositions for the stage were submitted to the review of certain judges, whose approbation it was necessary to obtain before they were allowed to be performed, it is not easy to account for those gross immoralities and violations of common decency which are to be found in the comedies of Aristophanes. Of this author's composition, we have eleven dramatic pieces, which, it must be owned, do not give a favourable opinion of the taste of the Athenians

* "Eupolis, Cratinus, Aristophanes, and the other old writers of comedy, used unbounded licence in exposing the knave, the thief, the adulterer, the assassin, or any infamous character whomsoever."

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at this period of their highest national splendour. It is true, that we discern exquisite knowledge of human nature in those dramas, and that they have high value, as throwing light on the manners and customs of the Athenians, and even on their political constitution. But there are coarseness of sentiment and ribaldry of expression in the comedies of Aristophanes, which to modern taste and manners appear extremely disgusting. We must presume, that even in the days of the author, such performances could have been relished only by the very dregs of the populace; and that what chiefly recommended them to these, was the malicious sarcasm and abuse which was thrown upon their superiors, often on the best and worthiest members of the commonwealth.

To the old comedy—of which the extreme licence and scurrility became at length disgusting as the manners of the Athenians became more refined—succeeded the middle comedy, which, retaining the spirit of the old, and its vigorous delineation of manners and character, banished from the drama all personal satire or abuse of living characters by name. The writers of this class were numerous, and we have several fragments remaining of their compositions, but no entire pieces. Of these fragments, Mr. Cumberland has published some valuable specimens, admirably translated, in the sixth volume of *The Observer*. Of these specimens, the passages taken from the comedies of Alexis, Antiphanes, Epicrates, Mnesimachus, Phœnicides, and Timocles, will give pleasure to every reader of taste.

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Last came the *new comedy of* the Greeks, including in point of time a period of about thirty years—from the death of Alexander the Great, to the death of Menander, the last and, perhaps, the greatest ornament of the Grecian drama. In this short period, the Athenian stage was truly a school of morals; and while comedy lost none of her characteristic excellence in the just delineation of manners, she had the additional graces of tenderness, elegance, and decorum. Of this brilliant era, the chief dramatic writers were Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, Apollodorus, Philippides and Posilippus.

In the comedies of Menander was found a vein of the most refined wit and pleasantry, which never transgressed the bounds of decency and strict morality. His object was at once the exemplary display of the charms of virtue, and the chastisement of vice; and employing, alternately, the grave and the jocose, attempering moral example with keen but elegant satire, he exhibited the most instructive as well as the justest representation of human nature. Quintilian and Plutarch* have deservedly enlarged on the merits of this excellent dramatic poet, expressing their opinion, that he has eclipsed the reputation of all the other writers in the same department among the ancients. By the former of these authors, the plays of Menander are recommended, as a school of eloquence for the formation of a perfect

* Quint. l. x. c. i., and Plutarch. Comp. Aristoph. and Menand.

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orator; so admirable is the skill of the poet, in painting the manners and passions in every condition and circumstance of life. The eulogium of Menander, by Quintilian, might, in modern times, be held as no exaggerated character of our immortal *Shakspeare*. How much is it to be regretted, that of all the works of this great master of the ancient drama, of which they were near one hundred comedies, there should, unfortunately, remain nothing more than a few detached passages preserved by Athenæus, Plutarch, Stobæus, and Eustathius! Yet even these justify the high character which the ancient critics have given of this poet; and we have yet a completer and more ample proof of his merits in the comedies of Terence, which are now universally considered as little else than versions from Menander *.

Next in merit to Menander, and not inferior to him in fertility of genius, was Philemon, who is recorded to have written no less than ninety comedies. Of his remains, the few fragments preserved by Athenæus and Stobæus do not derogate from the character given of him by Quintilian and the ancient critics, as second, at least, in dramatic talents to the prince of the comic stage. In the same scale of merit stood Diphilus, of whom Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius give a high character, in point of morals as well as comic humour. Of his works, as well as those of his rivals, Apollodorus

* Mr. Cumberland, in the Observer, No. 149, has translated some of the fragments of Menander with great spirit and sufficient fidelity, as also one of Diphilus.

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Philippides, and Posidippus, there remain a few fragments.

Time has happily spared to us more considerable remains of the tragic muse of the Greeks than of the comic, and fortunately those pieces which have been preserved, are the production of the three great ornaments of the drama, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Among the celebrated tragic poets Æschylus ranks first in priority of time. Seventy years only had elapsed since the days of Thespis, when the Greek drama had no other stage for its exhibition than a wagon. The improvement that took place from that period, to the time when Æschylus produced those pieces which were crowned at the Olympic games, must have been great indeed. This author is said to have written sixty-six tragedies, for thirteen of which he gained the first prize in that department of poetry. The tragedies of Æschylus abound in strokes of the true sublime; but his genius, not always regulated by good taste, frequently betrays him into the bombast. *Sublimis—gravis—et grandiloquus usque ad vitium,* says Quintilian. He studied not in his compositions that regularity of plan, and strict observance of the unities, which the works of the succeeding poets seem to have rendered essential to the Greek drama; but to this very circumstance we are indebted for the wild and romantic nature of his plots, and that terrible grandeur with which his characters are sometimes delineated. The high esteem which Aristophanes had for the talents of Æschylus, is demonstrated, by that dispute which in his comedy entitled The Frogs, he feigns to have taken



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place in the infernal regions between Euripides and Æschylus for the tragic chair. Bacchus, the judge of the controversy, gives a direct decision in favour of Æschylus; and Sophocles acquiesces in the judgment, and declares that though he himself is ready to contest the palm with Euripides, he yields it willingly to Æschylus.

Euripides and Sophocles were about fifty years posterior in time to Æschylus; though both of them had begun their dramatic career in his lifetime. The judgment of the critics, both of ancient and of modern times, is almost equally balanced between these great masters of the drama. Quintilian leaves the question undecided with respect to their poetical merits; but prefers Euripides, as affording a better practical model of oratory, as well as on the score of his admirable, prudential, and moral lessons. Euripides is a great master of the passions, and with high skill in the excitement of the grander emotions of terror, rage, and madness, is yet more excellent in exciting the tender affections of grief and pity. In the judgment of Longinus, this poet had not a natural genius for the sublime; though the critic acknowledges that he is capable at times, when the subject demands it, of working himself up to a very high elevation, both of thought and expression. This criticism is certainly fastidious in no small degree. If a poet has it in his power to rise to the sublime when his subject demands it, what better proof can we have of a natural genius for the sublime? But how absurd to deny that the *Medea* is the work of a transcendent native genius for the sublime! As a moralist, Euripides ranks perhaps the high-

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est among the ancient poets. He was the only dramatic writer of whom Socrates deigned to attend the representations. The singular esteem in which Cicero held him as a moral writer, he has strongly expressed in one of his letters to Tiro*, and it is a remarkable anecdote, that Cicero in the last moments of his life, when assassinated in his litter, was occupied in reading the *Medea*. It is well known, that that great and good man expected his fate; and we must thence conclude that he thought no preparation for death more suitable than the excellent moral reflections of his favourite poet. Of seventy-five tragedies written by Euripides, there remain to us nineteen, and the fragment of a twentieth. Quintilian justly gives it as a decisive proof of the high merit of this great dramatist, that Menander admired, and followed him as his model, though in a different species of the drama †.

Contemporary with Euripides was his great rival, Sophocles, who, in the judgment both of the ancient and modern critics, shares equally with the former the chief honours of the tragic muse. As the principal excellence of Euripides is judged to lie in the expression of the tender passions, so the genius of Sophocles has been thought more adapted to the grand, the terrible, and the sublime. Yet the latter has occasionally shown himself a great master in the pathetic. I know not that either the ancient or the modern drama can produce a

* Cic. Ep. ad Fam. lib. xvi. ep. 8.

† Hunc et admiratus maximè est, ut sæpe testatur, et secutus quamquam in opere diverso, Menander. Just. Or., l. x. c. 1.



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passage more powerfully affecting, than the speech of Electra on receiving the urn which she is told contains the ashes of her brother Orestes :—

Ω φιλτάτου μνημεῖον ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ, &c.
Soph. Elect., Act iv.

We perceive in the tragedies of Sophocles great knowledge of the human heart, together with a simplicity and chastity of expression in the general language of the characters, which greatly heightens his occasional strokes of the sublime. Of all the productions of the Greek stage which time has spared to us, that which is generally esteemed the most perfect is the Œdipus of Sophocles. There could not, perhaps, be devised a dramatic fable more perfectly suited to the excitement both of terror and pity than that of the unfortunate Œdipus; yet it is defective in one great point, which is a moral. There is no useful truth inculated by the spectacle of a man reduced to the utmost pitch of human misery, and marked out as an object of the indignation and vengeance of the gods, for actions in which it is not possible to accuse him of criminality. I have formerly taken notice of the strange paradox in the ideas of the ancients with respect to morality *, and I will not repeat the observation.

The manner in which the dramatic compositions of the Greeks were performed has afforded much matter for learned inquiry, and given room to considerable diversity of opinion. It is well known that the ancient actors, both in the Greek and Roman theatres, wore masks suited to the characters they represented, of which the enlarged

* Supra, book i., ch. 8.

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and distended features were calculated to be seen at a great distance; and the mouth was so constructed as to increase the sound of the voice like a speaking trumpet. The tragic declamation was loud, sonorous, and inflated, while the tone of the comic actors was nearer to the manner of ordinary discourse. The ancient tragedy may indeed be described, not as an imitation of nature, but as altogether an artificial composition, intended to produce a grand and imposing effect by the united power of music, dancing, strong and expressive gesticulation, and pompous declamation; the whole introduced through the medium of some interesting, but simple story, fitted by its nature to excite powerfully the emotions of terror and of pity. The ancient comedy, with the accompaniments of music and dancing, was an imitation of ordinary life, intended to inculcate good morals by just delineations of the laudable or faulty characters of mankind, as the more serious dramas of Menander and Terence; or to chastise vice by the ruder methods of satire, burlesque, and invective, as the comedies of Aristophanes and Plautus.

As the tragic and comic dramas were thus different in their nature, they were usually performed by different classes of actors*. Quintilian tells us that Æsopus declaimed much more gravely than Roscius, because the former was accustomed to act tragedy, and the latter comedy†. The dresses and decorations in the two species of drama

* Plato, 3 Dial. de Republ.

† Roscius citatior, Æsopus gravior fuit; quod ille comœdias, hic tragœdias egit.—Just. Or., lib. xi., c. 3.

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were likewise altogether different. The tragic actor used the *cothurnus*, or high-soled buskin, which increased his height some inches, and also a stuffed dress to give a proportional size and breadth to the figure*. The comic actor trod the stage with the *soccus*, or low-heeled slipper, and an ordinary garb, suited to the character in real life. It was therefore corresponding to their figures that the former declaimed in a loud and solemn tone, or mouthed his part, while the latter spoke in a natural tone and manner: *Comœdus sermocinatur*, says Apuleius, *Tragœdus vociferatur*.

There are some circumstances regarding the exhibition of the ancient drama, on which the modern critics are not agreed. There is good reason to believe that both the comedy and tragedy of the Greeks and Romans were set to music, and the greater part, if not the whole, sung by the actors, or spoken in musical intonation, like the recitative of the modern Italian operas. Not to mention the etymology of the words κωμωδια and τραγωδιά, plainly denoting the composition to be of the nature of song, there are many passages of the

* Lucian gives a most ludicrous picture of the costume of the tragic actors and their turgid manner of performance, in his dialogue on stage dancing.—Περι Ορχησεως. "What more absurd and ridiculous spectacle can there be, than to see a man artfully drawing out his figure to a most unnatural length, stalking in upon high shoes, his head covered with a fearful masque, with a mouth gaping wide, as if he was about to devour the spectators; not to mention his stuffed belly and chest, extended to give the long figure a proportional size; then his bellowing and ranting, sometimes blustering and thumping, then singing iambics, or musically whining out the most grievous calamities."

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ancient authors, which countenance the foregoing opinion *.

The ancient actors used in their performance a great deal of gesticulation, which was requisite, from the immense size of their theatres, in order to supply the defect of the voice, which, even with the contrivance before mentioned to increase its sound, was still too weak to be distinctly heard over so large a space. A violent and strongly-marked gesticulation was, therefore, in some degree, necessary; and this led to a very extraordinary practice in the latter period of the Roman theatre: namely, that there were two persons employed in the representation of one character. Livy, the historian, relates the particular incident which gave rise to this practice. The poet Livius Andronicus, in acting upon the stage in one of his own plays, was called by the plaudits of the audience to repeat some favourite passages so frequently, that his voice became inaudible through hoarseness, and he requested that a boy might be allowed to stand in front of the musicians, and recite the part, while he himself performed the consonant gesticulations. It was remarked, says the historian, that his action was much more free and forcible, from being relieved of the labour of utterance; and hence it became customary, adds Livy, to allow this practice in monologues, or

* Suetonius, in speaking of the Emperor Nero, who piqued himself on his talents as a player, and used frequently to exhibit on the stage, says, "*Tragœdias quoque cantavit personatus. Inter cætera cantavit Canacen parturientem* (a strange part for his imperial majesty to perform!) *Orestem matricidam, Oedipodem excœcatum, Herculem insanum.*" Some of these characters, it must be allowed, were sufficiently consonant to their actor.

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soliloquies, and to require both voice and gesture from the same actor only in the colloquial parts. We have it on the authority of Lucian, that the same practice came to be introduced upon the Greek stage. Formerly, says that author, the same actors both recited and gesticulated; but as it was observed that the continual motion, by affecting the breathing of the actor, was an impediment to distinct recitation, it was judged better to make one actor recite and another gesticulate. For farther information on this matter I refer to a very ingenious and ample disquisition by the Abbé Du Bos in his *Reflexions Critiques sur la Poësie et sur la Peinture*, tom. i. sect. 42.

In treating of the Greek drama, it would be an omission not to mention a species of dramatic composition—of a nature very much inferior to the proper tragedy and comedy of the ancients; but which, at length, in the corruption of taste, became greatly in fashion both among the Greeks and Romans, and seems, indeed, to have been carried to as high a degree of perfection as the nature of the composition would admit of. What I speak of is the *mimes* and *pantomimes*. The etymology of the words shows that this species of entertainment was considered as a sort of mimicry or ludicrous imitation. The *mimes* originally made a part of the ancient comedy, and the mimic actors played or exhibited grotesque dances between the acts of the comedy. As this entertainment was highly relished, the mimes began to rest on their own merits, and setting themselves up in opposition to the comedians, delighted the vulgar by making burlesque parodies on the more regular

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representations of the stage. Some of these pieces were published, and were of such merit as humorous compositions, that the philosopher Plato did not disdain to confess his admiration of them.

The pantomimes differed from the mimes in this respect, that they consisted solely of gesticulation, and seem to have been very nearly of the same tenure with our modern pantomimes. What is termed in France the Italian comedy, seems, on the other hand, to hold a very strict affinity with the ancient mimes. Both the one and the other, if we may judge from the name, were of Greek origin; but they were introduced into Rome towards the end of the commonwealth—and, as the spectacle was greatly relished, the art was proportionally cultivated and improved. The performances became gradually more refined and chaste; and that which was at first little better than low buffoonery, began at last to aspire at the merits of the higher drama, tragedy and comedy. The tragedy of Œdipus was in the reign of Augustus performed at Rome by the pantomimes in dumb show, and that so admirably as to draw tears from the whole spectators. The chief actors in this department were Pylades and Bathyllus; and the contentions excited by the partisans of these mimics arose at length to such a pitch, that Augustus thought proper to admonish Pylades in private, and caution him to live on good terms with his rival, for the sake of the public peace. Pylades contented himself with replying, that it was for the emperor's best interest, that the public should find nothing more material to engross their thoughts than him and Bathyllus. The chief

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merit of Pylades, as Athenæus informs us, lay in the comic pantomime, and that of Bathyllus in the tragic. But however great the perfection to which these performances were carried by the ancients, they were always regarded as a spurious species of the drama, indicating the corruption of a more liberal art*.

The genius of the Greeks was in no department of literary composition more distinguished than in history. In attending to the progress of the arts and sciences, it has been generally remarked that there are particular ages in which the human mind seems to take a strong bent or direction to one class of pursuits in preference to all others. Emulation may in a great measure account for this: for when one artist or one learned man becomes confessedly eminent, others are excited by a natural bias to the same studies and pursuits in which he has attained reputation. In treating of the fine arts among the Greeks, we remarked that extraordinary constellation of eminent artists which adorned the age of Pericles. We shall observe a similar phenomenon in the age of Leo the Tenth. In like manner we find the ablest of the Greek historians all nearly contemporary with each other. Herodotus, the most ancient of the Greek historians of merit, died 413 years before the Christian era; Thucydides 391 before that period; and Xenophon was about twenty years younger than Thucydides.

* Lucian is a warm apologist of the art of pantomime in his dialogue Περὶ Ὀρχησεως. And his contemporary, Apuleius, has given, in his florid style of writing, an amusing account of an ancient pantomime on the subject of the Judgment of Paris. Metamorph. l. x.

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Herodotus, a native of Halicarnassus, one of the Greek cities of Asia, has written the joint history of the Greeks and Persians, from the time of Cyrus the Great (599 B.C.) to the battles of Platæa and Mycale, a period of 120 years*. He treats incidentally likewise of the history of several other nations—of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Medes, and Lydians. His account of Egypt, in particular, is extremely minute and curious. He had travelled into that country, and besides what he relates from actual knowledge and observation, he was at much pains to obtain from the priests every degree of information they could give him of the antiquities and of the manners and customs of the country. He likewise visited the greatest part of Greece, travelling thence into Thrace and Scythia; and in Asia he made a journey to Babylon and Tyre, and the most considerable places in Syria and Palestine. With the object of writing his history, he seems to have been most solicitous to collect information from every quarter; and it is his greatest fault that he has not been sufficiently scrupulous in his admission of many idle and absurd anecdotes, which he had too much good sense to believe, and yet thought not unworthy of being recorded. It is true, that for the most part he puts the reader on his guard in such matters as he considers to be either palpably fabulous or not sufficiently authenticated; but the dignity of history is debased

* Herodotus gives a very brief detail of the preceding period, from the reign of Gyges, king of Lydia (718 B. C.), to the birth of Cyrus: but the history properly commences with Cyrus.

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even by the admission of such matter, under whatever caution it is presented. It is not to be denied, however, that the merits of Herodotus are of no common degree. When we consider him as the earliest writer of regular history among the ancients whose works have been preserved; while we observe the valuable and instructive details which we find in him, and in no other historian, and remark that the subsequent writers of reputation have rested for many material facts on his authority; while we attend to the unaffected ease and simplicity of his narrative, the graceful flow of his style, and even the charm of his antiquated Ionic diction—there is perhaps no historian of antiquity who deserves a higher estimation*. Several of the ancient writers have impeached the character of Herodotus in point of veracity; but none in such severe terms as Plutarch, who has written a pretty long dissertation, expressly to show the want of faith and the malignity of the historian. The fact is, that Plutarch bore strong enmity against Herodotus for a supposed aspersion cast by that historian on the honour of his country. Herodotus had related that in the expedition of Xerxes, the Thebans, apprehensive of the fate of their own territory, deserted the common cause and joined the Persians. The fact was true; but Plutarch, who was a native of Chæronea, one of the Theban states, could not bear this imputation on his country, and wreaked his spleen

* In Herodoto, cum omnia, (ut ego quidem sentio,) leniter fluunt, tum ipsa διάλεκτος habet eam jucunditatem ut latentes etiam numeros complexa videatur.—Quint. de Just. Or., lib. ix. c. 4.

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on the historian in the treatise before mentioned. The facts which he instances are in general very trifling, and are chiefly such stories as the historian owns he has related on dubious authority. Herodotus is said to have recited history to the Greeks assembled at the solemn festival of the *Panathenaia*, or, as others say, at the Olympic games—an expedient for the good policy of which Lucian gives him credit, as there could be no means half so speedy of making known his genius and circulating his reputation. Those public recitations had an admirable effect. It was this display of the talents of Herodotus and the fame which attended it, that kindled the enthusiasm of genius in the young Thucydides.

Thucydides was a native of Athens, and of an illustrious family; being allied, by the female line, to the kings of Thrace, and by the male, a descendant from Cimon and Miltiades. A contemporary, and familiarly acquainted with many of the most remarkable men of his country, with Socrates, Plato, Pericles, Alcibiades, it was no wonder that he felt the noble emulation of raising himself a name in future ages. He was bred to the profession of arms, and distinguished himself honourably, in the beginning of the war of Peloponnesus; but having miscarried in an attempt to relieve Amphipolis, then blockaded by the Lacedæmonians, he was banished, on that account, from his country, for the space of twenty years. He retired to the island of Ægina, and employed the long period of his exile in composing his history of the Peloponnesian war, of the progress and detail of which, besides his own personal

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knowledge, he spared no pains to obtain the most accurate information. Introductory to his principal subject, he gives a short view of the Grecian history, from the departure of Xerxes, to the commencement of the war of Peloponnesus, which connects his history with that of Herodotus: but he brings down the detail of the war only to the twenty-first year. The history of the remaining six years was written by Theopompus and Xenophon.

Thucydides is deservedly esteemed for the authenticity of his facts, his impartiality, and fidelity. We are, indeed, involuntarily led from his narrative, to favour the cause of his countrymen, the Athenians; of whom, however, it may be presumed, he had no reason to exaggerate the merits. The style of Thucydides is a contrast to that of Herodotus. The eloquence of the latter is copious and diffuse, and his expression, never rising to the elevated and magnificent, is chiefly remarkable for its simplicity and perspicuity. The former has a closeness and energy of style, which is equally lively and energetic*. Like Tacitus, he rises often to great sublimity of expression, and, like that author too, his diction is so compressed, that we find, often, as many ideas as there are words†. His narrative does not convey his

* Densus et brevis, et semper instans sibi Thucydides: dulcis et candidus et fusus Herodotus; ille concitatis, hic remissis affectibus melior; ille concionibus, hic sermonibus: ille vi, hic voluptate.—*Quintil.* l. x. c. i.

† Thucydides omnes dicendi artificio meâ sententiâ facile vicit, ut verborum prope numerum sententiarum numero consequatur: ita porro verbis aptus et pressus, ut nescias

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meaning easily, and without effort. He makes the reader pause upon his sentences, and keeps his attention on the stretch to apprehend the full import of his expressions. That effort of attention, however, is always amply rewarded, by the wisdom and sagacity of his observations, the intimate knowledge he shows of his subject, and the perfect confidence which he inspires of his own candour and veracity.

There is no other among the Greek writers who has shone more in the department of history, than Xenophon. This author was about thirty years younger than Thucydides; contemporary with many of the most illustrious men of Greece; and educated in the school of Socrates. He accompanied the younger Cyrus in his war against his brother Artaxerxes, and in the latter part of that expedition, commanded the Greek army in the service of Cyrus. We know the fatal issue of that enterprise, in which Cyrus fell by the hand of his brother;—a just reward for his unnatural and criminal ambition*. The retreat of the ten thousand Greeks, under Xenophon, gave him great fame as an able commander, eminently endowed with persevering courage, fertile in resources, and possessing that happy talent of address, and that popular eloquence, which are fitted for gaining the ready obedience and the confidence of an army. The narrative of this remarkable expedition, written by himself, has

utrum res oratione, an verba sententiis illustrentur.—*Cicero*, lib. 2. De Orat.

* See supra, book ii. chap. 2.

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justly entitled him to a high rank among the historians of antiquity*. His historical, political, and philosophical works are numerous†. Among these, one of the most known, though certainly not of the highest merit, is the *Cyropædia*, or Education of Cyrus; a fanciful composition, which blends history and romance, and is equally unsatisfying in the one point of view as the other. It is supposed that the author meant to exhibit the picture of an accomplished prince. But if that was his aim, to what purpose those frivolous and and childish tales of the nursery, those insipid jests, and that endless *verbiage* and haranguing upon the most ordinary and trifling occasions?

Xenophon was a man of strict virtue and probity, of strong religious sentiments, referring all to the watchful administration of the Deity, but prone to the superstitious belief of auguries and omens. As a writer, in point of style, he is a model of easy, smooth, and unaffected composition; and his pure Attic dialect has infinite grace, and a singular perspicuity or transparency of expression, which presents the thought at once to the reader's mind, and leaves him no leisure to

* See supra, book ii. chap. 2.

† He wrote, besides the Anabasis and the Cyropædia, a continuation, in seven books, of the Greek history of Thucydides; a Panegyric on Agesilaus; two treatises on the Lacedæmonian and Athenian Republics; The Apology for Socrates; and four books of the *Memorabilia* of that philosopher; a Treatise on Domestic Economy; The Banquet; Hiero, or the Economy of a Monarchy; besides some smaller essays on Imposts, Hunting, Horsemanship; and some Epistles of which we have only fragments.

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attend to the medium through which it is conveyed :—a supreme excellence of style, and rare, because ignorantly undervalued, in competition with point, brilliancy and rhetorical embellishment. *Quid ego commemorem* (says Quintilian) *Xenophontis jucunditatem illam inaffectatam, sed quam nulla possit affectatio consequi—ut ipsæ finxisse sermonem Gratiæ videantur* * ?

The three historians I have mentioned had the fortune to live in that age which witnessed the highest national glory of their country. But Greece, even in the days of her degeneracy as a nation, produced some historians of uncommon merit. Polybius lived in the second century before the birth of Christ; at the time when the only surviving spirit of the Greeks was that which animated the small states of Achaia. His father, a native of Megalopolis in Arcadia, was Prætor of the Achæan republic, and executed that important office with great honour. Polybius was trained from his youth to public affairs, for which his abilities eminently qualified him. He accompanied his father on an embassy to the court of the Ptolemies in Egypt, and afterwards went himself as ambassador to Rome, where he resided for several years. During that period he employed himself most assiduously in the study of the antiquities, laws, and customs of the Romans; and having permission from the senate to search into the records preserved in the capitol, obtained a more

* "Why should I mention that unaffected sweetness in Xenophon, which no affectation could ever reach—So that the Graces themselves seem to have modelled his composition?"—



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exact and profound acquaintance with the history and constitution of the Roman republic than any of its own citizens. It was probably by the advice of the great Scipio and Lælius, who were his intimate friends, that he formed the splendid design of composing a history of Rome, which should comprehend that of all the contemporary nations with which the affairs of the republic were connected. Preparatory however to this great undertaking, he resolved to travel into every country where lay the scene of any of those events he designed to record. In that view he visited most of the southern nations of Europe, a considerable part of Asia, and the coast of Africa. He explored himself the traces of Hannibal in his march across the Alps, and made himself acquainted with all the Gallic nations in their vicinity. In short, no writer was ever more scrupulous in the investigation of facts, or more perfectly acquainted with the scenes he had to describe. Thus his history is deservedly of the very highest authority among the compositions of the ancients. It is much to be lamented that so small a portion should remain of so valuable a work. Of forty books which he wrote, beginning from the commencement of the second Punic war, and carried down to the reduction of Macedonia into a Roman province, we have only the first five books entire, and extracts, or rather an abridgment, of the following twelve, with some detached fragments from the remaining books preserved by other writers. We see in every page of Polybius the intelligent officer, the sagacious politician, and the man of probity and candour. He neither disguises the

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virtues of an enemy, nor palliates the faults of a friend. His description of military operations is clear and distinct, and his judgment is everywhere conspicuous in reasoning on the counsels which directed all public measures, and the causes which led to their success or failure. The style of Polybius, has, indeed, no claim to the praise of eloquence. Dionysius of Halicarnassus reproaches him with carelessness in the choice of his expressions, and inattention to the rules of good writing: but he is everywhere perspicuous, and the sterling value of his matter abundantly compensates his defects in point of rhetorical composition.

The next who deserves to be mentioned among the Greek historians of eminence, is Diodorus Siculus, who, in the latter period of the commonwealth and in the age of Augustus, composed at Rome his excellent General History, a work of thirty years' labour, of which only fifteen out of forty books have been preserved. The first five books relate to the fabulous periods, but record likewise a great deal of curious historical matter relative to the antiquities of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks. The next five books are wanting. The eleventh book begins with the expedition of Xerxes into Greece, and continues the Grecian history, and that of the contemporary nations, down to the age of Alexander the Great. The author is particularly ample on the affairs of the Romans and Carthaginians. The work of Diodorus appears to have been in great esteem with the writers of antiquity. The elder Pliny is high in his commendation;



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Justin Martyr ranks him among the most illustrious of the Greek historians; and Eusebius places greater weight upon his authority than that of any other writer. The modern writers have blamed him for chronological inaccuracy. It is not to be denied that the History of Diodorus is replete with valuable matter, and that his style, though not to be compared to that of Xenophon or Thucydides, is pure, perspicuous, and free from all affectation.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus deserves to be ranked among the most eminent of the Greek writers of history, both in regard to the importance of his matter and the merit of his style, which, though deficient in simplicity, is often extremely eloquent. Dionysius came to Rome in the reign of Augustus, and continuing to reside there for twenty-two years, employed that time in the most diligent research into the ancient records, in conversation with the most learned men of that age, and in the perusal of the older writers, whence he collected the materials of that most valuable work which he composed in twenty books, entitled *Roman Antiquities**. Of these only the first eleven books have been preserved, in which the origin and foundation of the Roman state are treated with great amplitude, and the history of the republic brought down to the end of the decemvirate. He has been censured for dealing in the marvellous; but the censure applies equally to Livy, who has repeated the same stories, without, it is probable, either

* He gives, in the Introduction to his work, an ample account of all the sources of information from which his history is compiled.

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believing them himself or expecting his readers to do so. Those who write of the origin of nations have but scanty materials for genuine history, and are thus tempted to eke them out with the popular fables. And these it is sometimes important to know, as they have frequently given rise to ceremonies and customs both of a religious and civil nature, of which the origin may therefore be considered as belonging to authentic history. The point in which Dionysius is more justly to be blamed, is his fondness for system, and the desire he has to persuade his readers of his own sagacity in discovering, as he imagines, a deep and refined policy in the founders of the Roman state, in all those constitutional regulations regarding the powers and rights of the different orders, the functions of the magistrates, &c., which in reality could only have arisen gradually and progressively, as circumstances pointed out and required them. Of this error of Dionysius, I shall have another occasion to take some notice.

There are few of the ancient historians who deserve a higher rank in the estimation of the moderns than Arrian, whose history of the expedition of Alexander is the most authentic narrative we have of the exploits of that great conqueror, as he is also the best expositor of the real motives and designs of that extraordinary man, of whose policy such opposite judgments have been formed. The narrative of Arrian, as he informs us in his preface, is founded on the accounts given by two of Alexander's principal officers, Aristobulus and Ptolemy Lagus, afterwards the sovereign of Egypt.

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No historical record, therefore, has a better claim to the public faith. The brief account of India by Arrian, which includes the curious journal of Nearchus's voyage, is likewise extremely interesting and instructive. The style of Arrian, formed on that of Xenophon, is a very happy imitation of that author's simplicity, purity, and precision. Arrian's merits are not solely those of an accurate and able historian; he was likewise a profound philosopher. It is to his writings that we owe all our knowledge of the sublime morality of Epictetus, of whom he was the favourite disciple, and has diligently recorded the philosophical lessons and maxims of his master. The short treatise entitled the Enchiridion of Epictetus, which is a complete epitome of the stoical morality, was written by Arrian, and, from its beautiful precision, is perhaps on the whole a more valuable memorial of that great philosopher than the four books which Arrian has collected of his discourses.

The last author I shall mention of those properly to be classed among the Greek historians is Plutarch, and perhaps there is no writer of antiquity of equal value in point of important matter and useful information. Plutarch was a Bœotian by birth, a native of Chæronea, a small state of which his father was chief magistrate, with the title of Archon. He was born in the 48th year of the Christian era, under the reign of the emperor Claudius. In his youth he travelled into Egypt, and while in that country, studied under Ammonius, a celebrated teacher of philosophy at Alexandria. Returning thence into Greece, he visited

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all the schools of the philosophers in that country; and, finally, with a mind replete with useful knowledge and an extensive acquaintance with men and manners, he repaired to Rome, for the purpose of examining the public records and collecting materials for the lives of the illustrious men of Italy and Greece. The reputation he had acquired as a man of great erudition procured him the acquaintance of all the learned, and introduced him to the notice of the emperor Trajan, who honoured him with high marks of his favour and friendship, and conferred on him the proconsular government of Illyria. A public life, however, was irksome to Plutarch, whose chief enjoyment lay in the pursuits of literature and philosophy. He returned after the death of Trajan to his native city of Chæronea, where he passed the remaining years of a long life in discharging the office of its chief magistrate, in the composition of his excellent writings, and in the continual practice of all the active and social virtues. The Lives of Illustrious Men, written by Plutarch, must upon the whole be ranked among the most valuable works which remain to us of the ancients. He is the only author who introduces us to an intimate and familiar acquaintance with those great men whose public exploits and political characters we find indeed in other historians, but of whose individual features as men, and of their manners in domestic, private, and social intercourse, we should be utterly ignorant, were it not for his descriptive paintings, and the truly characteristic anecdotes which he records of them. What, if at times the biographer is chargeable with

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a little garrulity, and a too scrupulous minuteness in the detail of circumstances not of the highest importance? So natural is the desire felt by the ingenuous mind of knowing every thing that concerns a great and illustrious character, that we can much more easily forgive the writer who is cheerfully lavish of the information he has collected, and at times descends even to trifling particulars, than him who, from a proud feeling of the dignity of authorship, is fastidiously sparing of his stores, and disdains to be ranked among the collectors of anecdote.

A great charm of Plutarch's writings is the admirable vein of morality which pervades all his compositions. Every sentiment proceeds from the heart, and forcibly persuades the reader of the amiable candour, worth, and integrity of the writer. While his biographical details contain the most valuable part of the ancient history of Greece and Rome, his moral writings include the sum of all the ancient ethics. Perhaps it was no exaggerated estimate of his merits made by Theodore Gaza, when he declared that if every trace of ancient learning was to perish, and he had it in his power to preserve one single book from the works of the profane writers, his choice would fall upon Plutarch.

The style of this author, though, in the judgment of the best critics, neither polished nor pure, is at all times energetic; and, on those occasions when the subject demands it, rises frequently to great eloquence.

An ancient Greek epigram of Agathias records

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the high esteem which the Roman people entertained for this excellent writer, in erecting a statue to his honour*.

* The epigram is thus translated by Dryden :—

" Bœotian Plutarch, to thy deathless praise
Does martial Rome this graceful statue raise;
Because both Greece and she thy fame have shared,
Their heroes written, and their lives compared.
But thou thyself could never write thy own;
Their lives have *parallels*, but thine has none."

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## CHAPTER IX.

GREEK PHILOSOPHY — Ionic Sect — Thales — Anaximander — Anaximenes — Anaxagoras — Italic Sect — Pythagoras — Empedocles, &c. — Eleatic Sect — Zeno — Leucippus — Democritus — Heraclitus — Socrates — Cyrenaic Sect — Aristippus — Cynics — Diogenes — Megaric Sect — Plato — Peripatetics — Aristotle — Sceptics — Pyrrho — Stoics — Epicureans — Reflections.

I HAVE already remarked that one considerable effect of the public games and festivals of the Greeks was the propagation and advancement of the literary spirit. The Olympic and other solemn games of the Greeks were not only the field of martial and athletic exercises, but of the contests for the palm of literature. Those immense assemblies were the stated resort of the poets, the historians, the rhapsodists, and even the philosophers.

After the days of Homer and Hesiod, the increasing relish for poetical composition gave rise to a set of men termed *rhapsodists*, whose original employment was to travel from one city to another, frequenting public entertainments and solemn festivals, and reciting the works of the poets which they had committed to memory. As the early poets were the first teachers of the sciences, those rhapsodists became commentators on their works, and expositors of their doctrines. The youth, who resorted to them for instruction, dignified their masters with the title of Sophists or professors of

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wisdom, and these sophists soon became the founders of different sects or schools of philosophy.

The history of the ancient philosophy, if we consider how small a portion it embraced of useful knowledge, and yet how ardent the zeal of its teachers, and how keen the controversies of the different sects, affords on the whole a mortifying picture of the caprice and weakness of the human mind: but on these very accounts, no subject of contemplation is more fitted to subdue in man those arrogant ideas of his own abilities, and of the all-sufficiency of his intellectual powers to subject the whole phenomena both of the natural and moral world to his limited reason and understanding.

The most ancient school of philosophy was that founded by Thales of Miletus, about 640 years before the Christian era, and termed the Ionic sect, from the country of its founder. Thales is said to have learned great part of his knowledge in Egypt, as the ancients were fond of attributing the rudiments of all wisdom to that happy quarter. He became celebrated for his knowledge in geometry and astronomy; but the former of these sciences must be supposed to have been at that time in mere infancy, when one of Thales's discoveries is said to have been, that all right lines passing through the centre of a circle divide it into two equal parts. Yet Thales made some bold and fortunate conjectures in the science of astronomy. He conjectured this earth to be a sphere, and that it revolved round the sun. He believed the fixed stars to be so many suns encircled with other planets like our earth; he believed the moon's

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light to be a reflection of the sun's from a solid surface: and if we may trust the testimony of ancient authors, he was able to calculate eclipses, and actually predicted that famous eclipse of the sun 601 years before the birth of Christ, which separated the armies of the Medes and Lydians at the moment of an engagement. The metaphysical opinions of Thales are but imperfectly known. He supposed the world to be framed by the Deity out of the original element of water, and animated by his essence as the body is by the soul; that the Deity therefore resided in every portion of space; and that this world was only a great temple, where the sight of everything around him reminded man of that Great Being which inhabited and pervaded it*. As a specimen of the moral doctrines of Thales we have the following excellent opinions and precepts: "Neither the crimes of bad men, nor even their thoughts, are concealed from the Gods. Health of body, a moderate fortune, and a cultivated mind, are the chief ingredients of happiness. Parents may expect from their children that obedience which they themselves paid to their parents. Stop the mouth of slander by prudence. Take care not to commit the same fault yourself which you censure in others†."

The disciples of the ancient philosophers frequently made bold innovations on the doctrines of their masters. Anaximander, the disciple and suc-

* Thales—homines existimare oportere, omnia quæ cernerent Deorum esse plena; fore enim omnes castiores, velutique in fanis essent, maximè religiosi.—Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 2.

† Diog. Laert. in Vita Thal.

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cessor of Thales, who first committed the tenets of the Ionic school to writing, taught that all things are in a state of continual change; that there is a constant succession of worlds; and that while some are daily tending to dissolution, others are forming. Anaximander is said to have been the first constructor of the sphere, to have delineated the limits of the earth and sea, and to have invented the gnomon for pointing the hours by the shadow on the sun-dial. His contemporary Anaximenes, of the same school, believed the Divinity to reside in the air, which he likewise made to be the original and constituent principle of all the other elements.

The most intelligible and rational opinions of any philosopher of this school were those of Anaxagoras; and, as deviating most from the vulgar errors and superstition, he was accused of impiety. He taught that the first efficient principle of all things was an immaterial and intelligent Being, existing from all eternity; that the *substratum*, or subject of his operations, was *matter*, which likewise existed from all eternity in a chaotic state, comprehending the confused rudiments of all different substances, which the intelligent mind of the Creator first separated, and then combined for the formation of the universe, and of all bodies, animate and inanimate. It is true that Thales propagated the doctrine of an eternal mind, the Creator and Ruler of the universe; but he, like most of the ancient philosophers, seemed to consider this mind as united to matter, which was animated by it, as the body is by the soul. Anaxagoras regarded the mind of the Creator to be

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altogether distinct from matter; incapable of being included in space or substance of any kind, and of a nature entirely pure and spiritual. But if the general principles of Anaxagoras's philosophy were correct and rational, when he came to particulars, his notions partook of the vulgar absurdities. He conjectured the stars to be stones, which the rapid movement of the ether had whirled up into the region of fire. The sun he supposed to be a mass of red-hot iron, somewhat bigger than the Peloponnesus; an opinion, we are told, which led to a charge of impiety, and was punished by sentence of banishment and a fine of five talents; though Pericles, who had been Anaxagoras's pupil, stood forth on that occasion as his defender. His successors of the Ionic school were Diogenes of Apollonia, and Archelaus; the latter, the master of Socrates, who thence, in strict arrangement, should be recorded among the philosophers of the Ionic sect; but as this great man made a signal revolution in philosophy, I delay to mention his doctrines and opinions, till I give a brief account of the notions of his predecessors.

Soon after the Ionic arose the Italic sect, so termed from the country where Pythagoras, its founder, is said to have first taught. Pythagoras is generally believed to have been a native of Samos; but the time in which he flourished is quite uncertain. All that Brucker concludes, from comparing the different accounts, is, that his era may be placed somewhere between the forty-third and fifty-third Olympiad; that is to say, near six centuries before the birth of Christ. Pythagoras travelled into Egypt, where he spent, as is said,

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no less than twenty-two years in the study of the sciences, as well as of the secret doctrines of the priests. After the invasion of that country by Cambyses, he was carried among the captives to Babylon, where he increased his stores of wisdom by the conversation of the magi. Thence he is said to have travelled into India, to acquaint himself with the doctrines of the Gymnosophists. Returning into his native country of Samos, he chose to escape the tyranny of its sovereign by migrating into Italy, where he established a school at Crotona, and signally contributed by his doctrines and example to reform the manners of that dissolute city. In imitation of the Egyptian priests, Pythagoras professed two different kinds of doctrine, the one accommodated to vulgar use, and the other reserved for the private ear of his favourite disciples. The object of the former was morality; the latter consisted of many mysteries which we are probably at no loss for being very little acquainted with. Five years of silence were requisite for preparing his scholars for the participation of these secrets. These disciples formed among themselves a sort of community; they lived all in the same house together with their wives and children; they had their goods in common, and their time was parcelled out and appropriated to various exercises of mind and body. Music was in high esteem with them, as a corrective of the passions; and they had one kind of music for the morning to awaken and excite the faculties, and another for the evening to relax and compose them. The notion which Pythagoras inculcated of the soul's transmigration through

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different bodies, made his disciples strictly abstain from animal food. As a proof that Plutarch, though commonly regarded by the critics as an unpolished writer, was not destitute of eloquence, we might desire any one to read that short oration of his *περὶ σαρκοφαγιας*; an apology for the Pythagoreans abstaining from the flesh of animals, of which there is a beautiful paraphrase in the *Emile* of Rousseau; an address to the feelings which would almost make us believe ourselves monsters, for indulging an appetite so cruel and unnatural.

The main object of the philosophy of Pythagoras was to mortify and subdue the corporeal part of our nature by a certain prescribed course of discipline, and thus to prepare and fit the intellectual part for its proper function, the search of immutable truth, the contemplation of the divine nature, and the nature of the human soul. The long silence enjoined to his disciples accustomed them to mental abstraction. The sciences of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy, were sedulously cultivated; but whether as considered to be parts of the preparatory discipline, or as the objects of that discipline, seems to be a little uncertain. The latter would appear the more probable supposition, for this reason, that the philosopher taught that much mysterious and hidden truth was contained in certain arithmetical numbers and geometrical and musical proportions, which he communicated only to the higher and more advanced class of his disciples. Pythagoras regarded the human soul as consisting of two parts—the one a sensitive, which is common to man and the inferior animals; the other a rational and

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divine, which is common to man with the Deity, and is indeed a part of the divine nature. The first perishes with the body, of which it is an inseparable adjunct; the other survives and is immortal; but after the death of one body it enters into another, and so passes through an endless series of transmigrations. It is punished by degradation into the body of an inferior animal, and thus suffers a temporary suspension of its rational and intellectual nature. It was this notion which led to abstinence from the flesh of animals. It is uncertain whether Pythagoras committed any of his doctrines to writing. What remains under his name is commonly believed to have been the writing of some of his disciples. The Golden Verses, on which Hierocles has written a commentary, and which contain the principal moral tenets of the Pythagorean philosophy, are, from the polished structure of the verse, evidently of a much later age than that of the philosopher. They have been attributed with some probability to Epicharmus, who lived about 440, B.C.

Of the Pythagorean or Italic sect, there were many philosophers of reputation:—among others, Empedocles of Agrigentum, who attained to considerable eminence in physical science, and who is said to have thrown himself into the crater of Mount Etna, either from the desire of exploring the cause of its eruptions, or of propagating the belief that the gods had caught him up into heaven; it is a wiser and more charitable supposition, that he owed his death to a laudable but rash curiosity. Epicharmus of Agrigentum, the supposed author of the *Aurea Carmina*, was



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likewise a teacher of the Pythagorean philosophy, and attempted to render its doctrines popular by introducing them to the public through the medium of the drama; a project which gave offence to the graver teachers of wisdom, but procured this philosopher a more extensive reputation; for his comedies were so excellent, that Plautus did not disdain to borrow from them. Archytas of Tarentum was likewise of the Pythagorean school. He is said to have suggested that division of the ten predicaments, which was afterwards adopted by Aristotle. It is as an able geometrician and astronomer that Horace has embalmed his memory and recorded his unhappy fate.

"Te maris et terræ, numeroque carentis arenæ
Mensorem cohibent, Archyta,
Pulveris exigui prope litus parva matinum
Munera, nec quicquam tibi prodest
Aerias tentasse domos, animoque rotundum
Percurrisse polum, morituro*."

*Hor. Od.* l. i. 28.

He perished by shipwreck, in a voyage undertaken probably for the purpose of astronomical or geometrical discoveries. But the most celebrated philosopher of the Pythagorean sect, of whose opinions we have the best information, because from his own writings, is Ocellus Lucanus. His

* "Close by the shore a span of earth contains,
Oh, mighty man of art! thy last, thy great remains;
Whose penetrating mind and skilful hands
Measured the heavens and earth, and numbered all the sands.
Vain is thy learning now; thy active soul
No more shall trace the stars, or travel to the pole."

*Bentley.*

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treatise Περὶ του παντος, or of the Universe, has come entire down to our times, and is a valuable monument of the philosophy of the ancients. His fundamental doctrines are the eternity of the mundane system, and its absolute perfection, so as to exclude the possibility of change from the failure or corruption of any of its parts. From this ancient philosopher, Aristotle and Plato have borrowed largely in their writing *on the nature of the universe.*

The Eleatic sect of philosophy, believed to have sprung from the Pythagorean or Italic, was founded by Xenophanes, about 500 years before Christ. It was called Eleatic because it owed its fame chiefly to Parmenides, Zeno, and Leucippus, natives of Elea, a city of Æoli. The metaphysical doctrines of this sect, in so far as we can judge of them from the few fragments which have survived, and the notices of them found in the works of Aristotle, are perfectly unintelligible. They maintained that things had neither a beginning, an end, nor any change; that all the phenomena which we see of changes in the visible world are entirely in our own senses; and that of the real essence of things we have no perception, and therefore can attain to no knowledge; but as our senses are fallacious, and it is only through their medium that we perceive any thing, so we cannot trust to them, and therefore have no assurance of the truth of anything whatever. Yet upon this basis of nothing, the Eleatics (strange to tell) raised a system of physics, of which the principal doctrines were, that the universe was a compound of the four elements; that



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the stars were kindled up by the motion of the clouds; that the sun was an immense body of ignited vapour; but that various suns lighted various parts of the earth; and, finally (the only rational dogma, though not derived by any logical inference from premises), that there is but one God who rules over all nature.

Of the Eleatic school were Leucippus and his disciple Democritus; though they seem to have introduced a philosophy considerably different from that of Parmenides, Xenophanes, and Zeno. Leucippus supposed all things to have originated from atoms, moving in an infinite space, and producing all sensible objects by their combinations: but it was only these combinations that we perceived; we did not perceive the atoms themselves; we therefore did not perceive the reality of things, but only their appearance; a strange and pitiful sophistry. If Democritus held these opinions, it was no wonder that he, who is said to have laughed at every thing, should have laughed at the doctrines of his own sect, and at all who adopted them: but the truth is, that Democritus was of no such sportive disposition. He spent the greatest part of his life (which was extended to a hundred years) in solitary study, in observing the phenomena of nature, making experiments on minerals and dissecting the human body — a course of life which indicates a genius superior to the folly of framing idle theories on the sole basis of conjecture.

From the same school of Elea, though sometimes accounted the father of a new sect, was Heraclitus, whose disposition, the reverse of that

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of Democritus, accounted every thing a matter of melancholy. He seems to have been endowed with the austere spirit of a Carthusian; for, rejecting the chief magistracy of his native city, Ephesus, on account of the incorrigible vice of its inhabitants, he betook himself to the desert, and fed upon roots and water, making the beasts his companions in preference to man. He wrote a treatise on Nature, in which he made fire the origin of all things; but this fire he conceived to be endowed with mind, and to be properly the *anima mundi*, or the Divinity. His writings were purposely obscure, whence he got the epithet of Σκοτεινος, or the dark philosopher. It is said, that Euripides having sent this treatise on Nature to Socrates, the latter, with his accustomed modesty, gave it this character, "That all that he could understand of it seemed good; and that what surpassed his understanding, he presumed might likewise be so."

Hitherto, the principal object of the ancient Greek philosophy seems to have been the framing of theoretical systems of the origin and fabric of the universe, and the nature of the Divinity, accounted its soul, or animating principle: sublime, no doubt, and daring speculations, but little accomodated either to the weak intellect of man, or suited to improve his moral nature and increase his happiness. We must now speak of a philosopher who took juster views both of the powers and of the wants of human nature, and who, accordingly, directed his attention to that true philosophy whose object is at once to enlighten the understanding and improve the heart. It is easily perceived,

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that I speak here of Socrates, he who, according to Cicero's comprehensive eulogy—"brought down philosophy from heaven to dwell upon earth, who made her even an inmate of our habitations *," and directed her research to the real interests of man, in the pursuit of his highest attainable happiness. With the fate of this illustrious teacher we are already acquainted †. It is necessary here only to take notice of his method of philosophising, and of his principal doctrines. Greece was, in the days of Socrates, overrun with Sophists—pretended philosophers, whose whole science consisted in a certain futile logic; an artificial apparatus of general arguments, which they could apply to every topic, and by which they could maintain, with an appearance of plausibility, either side of any proposition. It was usual for these philosophers to get up in the public assemblies or in the theatres, and offer to argue or make an oration on any subject that should be named. The Athenians, a superficial people, fond of every thing new and extraordinary, were quite captivated with this kind of jugglery ‡. The Sophists passed for the wisest and most eloquent of men; and the youth flocked in crowds to their schools, where the rudiments of this precious art were explained and communicated. The sober part of the Athenians judged this to be a very useless

* Cic. Tusc. quæst. l. i. c. 5.

† See supra, book ii. ch. 2.

‡ Seneca has well compared sophistical reasoning to the tricks of a juggler, though he judges too favourably in accounting it a harmless play. "Idem de istis captionibus dico: nec ignoranti nocent, nec scientem juvant."—Sen. Epist. 45.

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discipline; but the wiser Socrates saw the pernicious tendency of this new art of philosophising, which made every thing uncertain and problematical; and his penetrating intellect easily perceived the method by which it was to be exposed and destroyed.

As all the strength and skill of the Sophists lay in the application of general arguments to the questions which they canvassed, nothing more was necessary for their confutation than to bring them to particulars—to set out by some simple and self-evident proposition, which being granted, another followed equally undeniable, till the disputant was conducted, step by step, by his own confessions, to that side of the question on which lay the truth. No method could be devised more effectual than this for the detection of sophistry; and the Athenian logicians very soon found that their general apparatus of argument would not avail them against so subtle an antagonist. They lost all credit and reputation as philosophers; but they had influence enough to poison the minds of the people with the belief that Socrates taught impious doctrines, contrary to the religion of their country; and their malice, as we have already seen, was but too successful. Their revenge was satiated by the death of one of the best of men: a crime which drew upon Athens the reproach of all Greece, and which she vainly endeavoured to expiate by the punishment of his judges, and the honours paid to his memory.

The doctrines of Socrates, which he never committed to writing, are only to be gathered imperfectly from Plato and Xenophon. The latter is

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the better authority, as Plato is generally believed to have used the name of Socrates on many occasions to give weight to his own opinions. Socrates founded all his morality on the belief of a God, who delighted in virtue, and whose justice would reward the good and punish the wicked in an after state. Of consequence, he believed in the immortality of the soul. He held that there were intermediate beings between God and man, who presided over the different parts of the creation, and who were to be honoured with an inferior worship. He believed that virtuous men were particularly favoured by the Divinity, who more especially manifested his care of them by the constant presence and aid of a good genius, who directed all their actions, and guarded them by secret monitions from impending evils; but on this subject, as he declined to express himself with precision, it has been reasonably conjectured, that he alluded merely to the influence of conscience, which extends its power to the virtuous alone, and deserts the vicious, abandoning them to the just consequences of their crimes. With regard to the pursuit of knowledge, Socrates held that all science was contemptible which did not tend to the happiness of man, by the regulation of his conduct in society; that the most beneficial wisdom is to be intimately acquainted with ourselves, to see our errors and defects, that we may be enabled to amend them. He inculcated a veneration for the religion of our country, a strict respect to its laws, and a reverence for its governors, while at the same time he held the rational opinion that the true foundation of legal government is the consent of the people, and the

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surest bond of the subject's allegiance, the watchful care and virtuous disposition of the sovereign.

Socrates did not affect the manners or the habits of a public teacher. He had no school; he gave no professed lectures on philosophy; he mingled with his fellow-citizens in all ranks of life, conversing with each man on the subjects best suited to his occupation and talents. The theatres, the temples, the shops of the artists, the courts of justice, the public streets, were all occasionally the scene of his moral conversations and instructive arguments. Even the house of the courtezan Aspasia was honoured with his frequent visits. He found in that accomplished woman a mind stored with various knowledge, an acute and vigorous understanding, and those engaging manners which gave her a powerful hold of the minds of the Athenian youth. She was the mistress and confidant of Pericles, who did not disdain to consult her on affairs of public concern. If we should hesitate to suppose that the philosopher thought it not unworthy of his character to improve her morals and reclaim her mind to virtue, he might reasonably seek his own improvement, and avail himself of her knowledge of the world to enlarge and extend his powers of utility.

"Tutor of Athens! he in every street
Dealt priceless treasure: goodness his delight,
Wisdom his wealth, and glory his reward.
Deep through the human heart, with playful skill,
His simple question stole; as into truth
And serious deeds he smiled the laughing race;
Taught moral happy life, whate'er can bless
Or grace mankind; and what he taught he was."

*Thomson's Liberty*, part ii.

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With the death of Socrates, Sophistry regained her empire. Even his own disciples departed from the doctrines of their master. Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic sect, adopted great part of the Socratic morality, but added some peculiar opinions of his own. It was his idea that a philosopher would follow justice and the practice of virtue, from the sole consideration of his own advantage, and without regard to the interests of others. He placed the chief happiness of man in pleasure, and true philosophy was that which procured the largest portion of selfish gratification. We must presume that intellectual, not sensual pleasure was in the philosopher's contemplation while he advanced this dogma; but even with this allowance, his object was far less worthy than that which his master proposed, general utility.

The morality of Socrates, thus modified by the Cyrenaic sect and not improved, was pushed the length of extravagance by the Cynics. The founder of this sect was Antisthenes, a pupil of Socrates, but who probably did not possess the esteem of his master. To evince his contempt of luxury, he chose to wear an old and tattered cloak. "Why so ostentatious?" said Socrates. "Through your ragged coat I see your vanity." Virtue, in the opinion of the Cynics, consisted in renouncing all the conveniences and comforts of life. They clothed themselves in rags, disdained to live in a house, slept in the streets, ate nothing but what was coarse and insipid, and wandered about the country with a stick and a knapsack. They decried all the arts as either useless or dangerous. Science was altogether fruitless and unnecessary; for a virtuous

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man had attained to the perfection of his nature, and had no need to learn any thing. From voluntary ignorance they advanced to impudence; and having nothing to lose, while they scorned all gain, they indulged themselves in satire and invective without restraint. It is, however, not improbable that this spirit of censure with which they were actuated has drawn many calumnies on their sect. The vices with which Diogenes has been reproached are hardly to be believed, when we know that some of the most virtuous of the Greeks were his admirers and disciples.

As the character of this extraordinary person was differently judged of in his own time, some accounting him the wisest of men and others little better than a madman, it is no wonder that his estimation with the moderns should be equally various. It is not to be doubted that the love of singularity was a powerful motive of his conduct and opinions. He opposed the common sense of mankind, and affected a contempt even of reputation, as he found that conduct a new mode of acquiring it. But that in his character there were many features of a truly philosophic mind, we are warranted to conclude from the uncommon excellence of those opinions and sentiments of his which the ancient authors have preserved. Diogenes held that the practice of virtue was man's chief end of existence; that as the body is strengthened by active labour, the mind is invigorated and kept in health by a constant tenour of active virtue; that even the contempt of pleasure is a solid and rational pleasure; that self-applause is a sufficient reward to the wise man; while glory, honours, and

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wealth are only the bait of fools; that the consummation of folly is to be loud in the praise of virtue without practising it; that the gods refuse the prayers of man often from compassion.

The caustic wit of Diogenes procured him both enemies and admirers. Of this talent the ancient writers, and particularly his namesake Laertius, have preserved many specimens. There was a mutual hostility between him and Plato. That the latter, however, entertained no mean opinion of the talents of his rival, appears from his terming him *a Socrates run mad.* Plato had defined man to be a two-legged animal without feathers. Diogenes plucked the feathers from a cock, and thrust him into the academy: "See," said he, "Plato's *man!*" The bluntness of his manners was exemplified in his celebrated answer to Alexander the Great, who coming to visit the philosopher, and finding him seated in his tub, asked if he could do him any favour; "Yes," said the other, "stand from between me and the sun." Discoursing, one day, in a grave tone on the practice of virtue, when he observed his auditors dropping off, he began all at once to bawl out a song of ribaldry and nonsense, when immediately a great crowd gathered around him: "See," said he, "how willingly a fool is listened to, when a wise man is neglected." Hearing, on one occasion, a worthless fellow lamenting that he was dying at a distance from his native country, "Don't be uneasy, friend, about that," said he, "wherever you die, you'll find a passage to hell."

It is not a little extraordinary that a sect even of sophists should have arisen from the school of

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Socrates. This was the Megaric sect, of which Euclid was the founder; not Euclid the mathematician, for his science owned no affinity with sophistry. The Megaric philosophers were the happy inventors of those logical quibbles which, even in modern ages, exercised the talents of the gravest men, and which were often employed with success to propagate error and obscure the truth. The chief philosophers of this sect, besides its founder, were Eubulides, Alexinus Eleensis, characteristically named *Elenchinus* or the Wrangler, Diodorus surnamed *Cronos* or the Driveller, and Stilpo, a philosopher of real learning and ability, but who gave too much importance to subtilty of disputation—in Brucker's phrase, *in litigioso dicendi genere potentissimus.*

The most celebrated of the disciples of Socrates was Plato, a philosopher whose doctrines have had a more extensive and a more lasting empire over the minds of mankind than those perhaps of any other of the ancients. Plato, a native of Ægina, and thus by his country an Athenian, was born about 430, B. C. His lineage was most illustrious, being descended on the father's side from Codrus, and on the mother's from Solon. With every accomplishment of education suitable to his birth, and showing early indications of a genius for poetry, he attached himself at the age of twenty to the school of Socrates, and soon became the greatest adept in the philosophy of his master, whose discourses he committed to writing in the same colloquial form in which they were delivered. The Dialogues of Plato are therefore the most ample documents of the Socratic philosophy, though

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not the most correct and pure; for it was Plato's practice to blend his own opinions with those of Socrates, and this without any note of distinction. He learned the dialectic art from Euclid the Megaric; he studied the Pythagorean system under Phitolaus and Archytas; and his travels into Egypt accomplished him in all the wisdom of that country, and particularly in the science of geometry. Returning to Athens, he established his school in the grove called the Academy, over the gate of which, to show the importance he annexed to mathematical studies, he placed this inscription, Ουδεις ἀγεωμετρητος ἐισιτο, "Let none enter here who is ignorant of geometry."

The reputation of Plato procured him numberless hearers and admirers. Among these were some of the most eminent men of Greece. It is enough to say that Demosthenes, Isocrates, and Aristotle were his disciples. The philosophy of Plato embraced three distinct branches of science: theology, under which are comprehended his metaphysical opinions; physics; and politics. In the first department it was Plato's fundamental doctrine *that from nothing nothing can proceed.* Believing, therefore, in the eternal existence of the Deity, he believed likewise in the eternity of *matter*, as the substratum or ὑλη of the Deity's operations. This matter, however, was in a chaotic state, and endowed with no qualities whatever, till the eternal mind conferred these qualities upon it, reduced it into order, and thus formed the beautiful fabric of the universe, of which *the idea* or archetype had existed from all eternity in himself. But in chaotic matter Plato conceived that as there

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was an original deformity, so there was a natural resistance to that perfect order and excellence which the Deity sought to produce, but which he could not entirely overcome; and hence the origin of that evil which partially contaminates his works: yet here the philosopher seems himself to perceive the objection from the boundless power of the Divinity, as he expresses himself with great obscurity on the subject. His notions of God, however, are not only most sublime, but extremely refined. He conceived that the Divine nature consisted of three distinct essences, states, or hypostases: the first a pure and self-existent Essence, whose sole attribute was goodness, hence indiscriminately termed by Plato τὸ ὀν and τὸ ἀγαθον; the second he conceived to be Mind, the wisdom or reason of the first, and the proper Creator of the universe, and therefore by Plato termed sometimes Νους (the intelligence,) Λογος (the word), and sometimes Δημιουργος (the Creator); the third he conceived to be the Soul of the world; as he conceived the activity of created matter to infer an inhabiting mind, and this he termed either simply the ψυχη (the soul), or ψυχη του κοσμου (soul of the world). The second *hypostasis* he supposed to be an emanation from the first, and the third from both. Such is the Platonic Trinity, bearing, in its general description, a strong resemblance to the Christian; but differing in this material point, that in the former, the second and third persons are subordinate and inferior to the first. Yet the learned Cudworth and other ingenious men have strenuously laboured to prove the perfect conformity of the two doctrines.

But in the metaphysics of Plato there is yet

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another principle, which it is more difficult to comprehend. This is his doctrine of *ideas*, which in some parts of his writings he seems to consider as eternal existences separate from the Divinity, and in others, to regard only as certain forms or notions eternally existing in the Divine mind. The former, Plutarch* seems to think, was Plato's meaning. But be this as it may, he regarded those ideas as something eternal and immutable, and therefore held that they were the only true and proper objects of science. It was according to these eternally-existing ideas that God himself had formed the universe, which he endowed with a living soul, whence proceed both its periodical revolutions and its active and productive energy. But the universe, being thus animated by a soul which proceeds from God, is hence to be considered as containing a part of the Divinity. The planets are in like manner animated by a part of the Divine nature. Man, endowed with a rational soul, contains within himself a part of God. That part—his intellectual spirit—therefore, existed from all eternity, and is in its nature incapable of extinction. Inhabiting a body of corrupt and rebel matter, it is subject to vice and misery; but, by a noble warfare against the corruption of its earthly vehicle, by subduing its unruly passions, and exercising itself in the practice of virtue and divine contemplation, it best fits itself for returning to its original state, a co-existence with the Divinity.

What is properly termed the physics of Plato is so chimerical, to say no worse, that it scarcely

* See his Platonic Questions and Commentary on the *Timæus* of Plato.

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merits attention. Fire and earth he supposed were the component parts of the visible world, and these were united by air and water. The particles of earth are cubes, those of fire are pyramidial, those of air are *octohedrons*, and those of water *eicosihedrons*. They are combined according to geometrical laws, and the *anima mundi* gives motion and regularity to the whole.

In politics Plato was equally a visionary speculatist as in physics. In his *Republic* and *Dialogue on Laws*, his notions betray an ignorance of human nature, with much enthusiasm of mind, and a large fund of benevolence. He wished to make all men philosophers, and to extinguish every vicious propensity by an absolute control of the passions; and his Republic might subsist were such a scheme practicable.

Two circumstances seem chiefly to have contributed to the great popularity and duration of the Platonic philosophy: the one, the eloquence with which its doctrines were propounded; the other, the pleasing effect of the notion which, by approaching man to the Deity, and making him even a part of the Divine nature, flattered his pride, and increased his self-importance.

The school of Plato, or the philosophy of the Ancient Academy, had in itself many divisions, whose particular distinguishing tenets it would be both tedious and fruitless to enumerate. But the Platonic philosophy found its chief opponents in four remarkable sects—those of Aristotle, of Pyrrho, of Zeno, and Epicurus; in other words, the Peripatetic, the Sceptic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean.



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Aristotle was born at Stagyra, a Thracian city, then under the dominion of Macedonia. His father was physician to Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. After a youth of dissipation, he betook himself with indefatigable ardour to the study of philosophy, and was for twenty years a favourite disciple of Plato. His high reputation for universal learning procured him from Philip the important charge of the education of the young Alexander—a trust which he fulfilled with zeal and ability. After his pupil had arrived at manhood, and had begun the career of his impetuous life, the philosopher repaired to Athens, where he established a school of philosophy in the Lyceum. It was his custom to discourse to his disciples in walking, and hence his philosophy was termed *peripatetic*. Endowed with great original genius, he disdained an implicit adherence to the doctrines of Plato, or those of any other philosopher. He not only dared to think and reason for himself on almost every branch of human knowledge, but, nobly confident of his own powers, to prescribe the laws of reasoning to others, and even to reduce to system the combined result of all that was known in his age, both in the science of matter and of mind. A great body of his writings is yet preserved*, and is sufficient to warrant our estima-

* Very few of the writings of Aristotle were published during his lifetime. Among these few were probably his Poetics and his Art of Rhetoric, as both these treatises were composed for the use of his pupil Alexander, and might probably pass into many hands during the life of their author. The rest of his works he bequeathed to Theophrastus, who left them to Neleus Scepsius; the latter sold a part of them to Ptolemy Philadel-

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tion of Aristotle as one of the most vigorous and comprehensive geniuses that ever the world has produced.

The logics of Aristotle are contained in the books of his *Organon*. A predominant passion of this philosopher, observable in most of his writings, and more particularly in his logic, is the classifying and arranging the objects of knowledge. Thus the Organon sets out with a division of all things of a simple or uncompounded nature, into ten categories. Those are *substance*, *quantity*, *quality*, *relation*, *place*, *time*, *situation*, *having*, *doing*, *suffering*. Each of these is discussed at large in a separate chapter. We have next the division and arrangement of propositions into five prædicables or universals, viz., *genus*, *species*, *difference*, *property*, and *accident*. One or other of these may be predicated or affirmed of all propositions. The purpose of the division into *categories*, is to arrange all the simple and uncompounded objects of human knowledge under certain general classes; and by subdividing these, as private soldiers make part of a company, and so

phos, and these perished in the burning of the Alexandrian library. The rest were buried, as is said, for the sake of preservation, in some subterraneous vault where they lay forgotten for 130 years, and at their recovery were found in a very defective state from corruption. In that state they fell into the hands of Apellicon of Teos, who supplied the deficiencies from his own invention, and not always with great felicity. They came, finally, into the possession of Tyrannion, the grammarian, who used the same freedom to a yet greater degree. Hence we must make much allowance for the imperfection, obscurity, and perhaps contradiction, which may be found in the writings of Aristotle, as they now appear.



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many companies make a regiment, we can, in like manner, muster all the notions that enter the human mind, in rank and file, as a well-ordered and regular army. By the division into *prædicables*, we are taught all the relations which the subject can have to the predicate, or the thing affirmed of the subject. That divisions of this kind may have a beneficial effect in producing an accuracy in thinking and reasoning, it would be vain to deny; though it may be alike vain to annex to them such a degree of importance as they seem to have held with Aristotle and his followers.

But the chief part of the Organon of Aristotle is his theory of syllogisms contained in those books called the *Analytics*, because the intention of them is to resolve all reasoning into simple ingredients. It is well known what importance was for many ages annexed to syllogistic reasoning, in regarding it, not only as a test of truth, but as an instrument for the advancement of science. It is now, perhaps more than it ought to be, undervalued. It may be safely affirmed, that there is no false proposition which can stand the test of fair syllogistic argument, and, therefore, the utility of this criterion for the detection of sophistical reasoning cannot be denied. But it is equally an error to suppose, that syllogistic argument is capable of leading to discoveries in any of the sciences. If our forefathers, therefore, by trusting to it as a guide in the latter department, attributed more to this mode of reasoning than it was capable of performing, we of the present day, by denying its use in the former, and altogether ex-

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ploding its employment, seem to have run to an extreme as blameable. This error has arisen from a misapprehension of the sentiments of Lord Bacon, who is generally supposed to have condemned the syllogistic mode of reasoning as altogether useless. But this is a mistake. That great philosopher justly exploded the application of logical reasoning to the science of physics, by clearly showing that such a process could never lead to discoveries in that science, which were the fruit alone of induction from experiment, and the observation of facts. But he was far from denying the utility of logical reasoning in its proper sphere. He remarks, that it is the province of logic to lead not to the invention of arts, but of arguments, and therefore, that in the popular sciences of morality, law, divinity, and the like, it has its proper and useful application*.

A large portion of the works of Aristotle is occupied by his physical writings. In these he treats separately of the nature of the world, of the heavens, of meteors, of the human soul, of the length and shortness of life, of youth, old age, and death. He has likewise given an ample *history of animals* in ten books—a portion only of a work which extended to forty books. The regard which Alexander entertained for his preceptor, as well as for the interests of science, was manifested in his collecting, at a prodigious expense, during his Asiatic expedition, all the rare productions of

* See Bacon's works, vol. i. p. 63, folio edition. The utility of logical reasoning is most ably shown by Dr. Reid, in the concluding part of his Analysis of Aristotle's Logic, in *Sketches of the History of Man*, book iii.

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nature, and particularly an astonishing variety of animals, which he sent home to Greece for the use of Aristotle in the composition of his natural history. The descriptions, therefore, of natural objects, and of the structure and habits of animals, contained in this work, are extremely valuable, as being the result of actual examination and study. In the description of the heavenly bodies and their motions, and generally in mathematical science, Aristotle has shown less knowledge than his predecessors, Pythagoras and Plato.

The vanity of Aristotle prompted him to aim at universal knowledge; and professing to embrace the whole circle of the sciences, he only manifests the more signally his superficial knowledge in many departments, and his presumptuous rashness in deciding questions beyond the reach of human intellect. These palpable defects have injured his legitimate reputation in those branches of science in which he is truly excellent. It is in his critical and moral writings that the talents of Aristotle are more usefully displayed than in any other of his works: I allude here to the fragment, which alone we possess, of his *Poetics*, and to his *Art of Rhetoric*; more particularly the latter.

The Poetics of Aristotle have commonly been considered as a brief digest of the laws of criticism in poetry; but it is that species of criticism which assigns no other foundation for its judgments than authority, or the practice of the best writers. Aristotle in this fragment has not ascended to the source of criticism, which is to be found in the structure of the mind and nature of the passions. He describes

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with great precision the three different species of poetical comedy, tragedy, and epic * composition. He details the requisite ingredients of each species with respect to subject, as they are classed under the divisions of fable, sentiments, and manners; and he briefly lays down the rules for the structure and style of each species. But this code of laws rests upon the sole authority of the legislator, and not upon any solid basis of nature, or consonance to the universal feelings of mankind. The only reason given by Aristotle for their observance is, that Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and the best of the Greek poets, have observed them. This, no doubt, is a presumption of their rationality; and, at any rate, it is useful instruction in any art to know what has been the general practice of the best artists.

But the *Treatise on Rhetoric* is not a fragment, and must be more seriously considered. In that treatise the author has given an elaborate analysis of the passions, and of the sources of pain and pleasure, happiness and unhappiness; as such an analysis affords the best instruction in the means of swaying the passions and persuading the judgment to the purposes of the orator, which it is the province of this science to teach, Here Aristotle

* On the subject of comedy Aristotle has been extremely brief in his instructions. He has remarked, in general, that similar rules apply to a comic as to a serious subject, meaning that what he has said regarding the unities of time, place, and subject, and likewise the congruity of the sentiments and manners, have the same application in the one species of the drama as in the other. The poetics of Aristotle, however, are evidently an imperfected work, of which a considerable part has perished.

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has shown the most profound knowledge of human nature, and a genius truly philosophical—in investigating the most delicate modifications of the affections, and the power they have of balancing each other's influence; as he has strikingly evinced his own peculiar talent of generalisation and scientific arrangement.

The style of Aristotle is a great contrast to that of Plato: the latter is eloquent, diffuse, and figurative; the former dry, sententious, and so compressed, that it requires often the most painful attention to follow his chain of reasoning, and in many instances even to discover his true meaning. This is particularly the case in his metaphysical writings. The obscurity prevalent in these parts of his works was remarked by ancient writers, and has given rise to numberless commentaries and explanations, totally different from each other. It has been supposed that on some difficult points of discussion, the philosopher studied to express himself with obscurity: and hence Diogenes Laertius has compared himself to the cuttle-fish, which darkens the water around it to escape from danger. But Aristotle, wherever he is intelligible, discovers ample proof of a great, original, and comprehensive genius.

While Aristotle was employed in rearing the structure of the peripatetic philosophy, Pyrrho,* his contemporary, was busy in combating the opinions of all the different sects of philosophers.

* Pyrrho was a native of Elea, and born in the fourth century before Christ: he was a disciple of Anaxarchus, and accompanied that philosopher to India, in the expedition of Alexander the Great.

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It was his notion that the only true wisdom consisted in doubting of every thing. Endowed with penetration enough to discover the insufficiency of many of the prevailing systems, and clearly perceiving the inadequacy of the human understanding to resolve the most important questions both in the sciences of matter and of mind, it was his desire to expose the futility of all the laborious exertions of his predecessors in the search of truth, and to find a philosophic tranquillity of spirit in the belief that all was doubt and uncertainty.

The Pyrrhonists, or sceptics, therefore, formed no systems: they amused themselves in attacking the weak parts of other schemes of philosophy, and they had nothing to defend of their own. They found great advantage in the sophistical mode of reasoning, which they could fairly employ against those who used it, and which they could successfully expose when used against themselves. It was not unnatural that the sceptics should conclude from the irreconcileable differences of opinion that prevailed among various sects of philosophers, that among so many opposite systems the greater part had taught error instead of truth; but it was a rash conclusion thence to infer that truth had no existence, or that certainty on any subject of philosophical speculation was altogether unattainable. The sceptic, or Pyrrhonist, involuntarily refuted his own opinions by his practice; for though he held in theory, that there was no reality in moral distinctions, and that truth and falsehood, virtue and vice, beauty and deformity, had no real or essential difference, his actions and conduct in life were like those of other men, perpetually

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influenced and regulated by the belief of those essential differences. Thus the ridicule which he affected to throw upon other systems could be retorted with greater force upon his own; for that man is evidently less chargeable with absurdity who pursues a line of conduct which he believes to be right, than he who follows a line of conduct in absolute doubt whether it be right or wrong,

As the attainment of a perfect tranquillity of mind was the professed object of the Pyrrhonists, the opposite and rival sects of the Stoics and Epicureans proposed the same end in their systems of philosophy. We have seen the course pursued by the sceptics, a very improper one to attain its end, since it is obvious that there can be no mental tranquillity where the reason and the feelings are in constant opposition. The Stoics cherished, if not a more certain, yet a far more consistent, and doubtless a more dignified system of sentiments and conduct. They strove to attain philosophic tranquillity by an absolute command and sovereignty over the passions, and a perfect indifference to all the accidents and calamities of life. The founder of this sect, which is among the most distinguished schools of philosophy, was Zeno the younger, a native of Cyprus, who flourished in the third century before Christ. He was a disciple of Crates the Cynic; and on that system of philosophy he founded his own, which may be considered as an offspring of the Cynical school. The Stoical doctrines have had a very extensive prevalence and duration; and though in some particulars palpably erroneous, may be accounted, on the whole, more consonant

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to right reason, and more favourable to the practice of virtue, than those of any other sect of the philosophy of the ancients.

According to the Stoics, the whole universe, and God himself, the creator and soul of that universe, are regulated by certain laws, which are immutable and resulting from necessity. The actions of God himself are regulated by those general laws; yet in one sense they may be considered as free and voluntary; viz., that as there is nothing external of the universe which God pervades, and which his soul regulates, there is nothing external of himself which can impel or necessitate him. Man, according to the notions of the Stoics, is a part of the divinity. The human soul is a portion of that great soul which pervades the universe. The will of man is subject, like the Divine will, to unalterable laws; yet it is virtually free, because man believes himself a free agent, and his conduct is influenced by that belief. He obeys voluntarily and from inclination that destiny which he must have obeyed *ab ante*, though he had not inclined it. Man being a part of the universe which is regulated by God, cannot complain that he is bound by the same laws which regulate and bind universal nature, and even God himself. The wise man, therefore, never considers what is good or evil with respect to himself. Whatever happened to him must necessarily have happened according to the order of nature; because had it not been necessary, it would not have happened. The pains and pleasures of an individual are, therefore, unworthy of the regard of him who attends to the universal good: his pains and pleasures are

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determined by the same law which determined his existence. He cannot repine that he exists, for at whom shall he repine? He existed by the necessity of nature. Virtue, in the opinion of a Stoic, was nothing more than a manly resolution to accommodate the unalterable laws of nature. Vice was a weak and dastardly endeavour to oppose those laws. Vice therefore was folly, and virtue the only true wisdom.

But the virtue of the Stoics was not a principle of tranquil and passive acquiescence; it was a state of continual, active, and vigorous exertion. It was the duty of man to exercise the faculties of his mind in acquainting himself with the nature, the causes, and the relations of every part of that universe which he sees around him, that he may truly understand his own place in it, and the duties which he is destined and called on to fulfil. It is incumbent on man likewise to exercise his faculties in the discerning and distinguishing those things over which he has the power and control, and those which are beyond his power, and therefore ought not to be the objects of his care or his attention. All things whatever, according to the Stoics, fall under one or the other of these descriptions. To the class of things within our power belong our opinions, our desires, affections, endeavours, aversions, and, in a word, whatever may be termed our own works. To the class of things beyond our power belong the body of man, his goods or possessions, honours, dignities, offices, and generally what cannot be termed his own works. The former class of things are free, voluntary, and altogether at our command. The latter are in all respects the contrary; we

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cannot call them our own, nor in any shape control them. To the former, therefore, alone the wise man directs his care, and by a due attention to them his happiness is in his own power. The latter he despises, as incapable of affecting his real welfare, and in no degree obedient to his will.

As the Stoics believed the universe to be the work of an all-powerful, all-wise, and supremely beneficent Being, whose providence continually regulates the whole of that system of which every part is so combined as to produce the greatest possible sum of general good; so they regarded man as a principal instrument in the hand of God to accomplish that great purpose. The Creator, therefore, with transcendent wisdom, had so framed the moral constitution of man, that he finds his own chief happiness in promoting the welfare and happiness of his fellow-creatures. "In the free consent of man to fulfil this end of his being, by accommodating his mind to the Divine will, and thus endeavouring to discharge his part in society with cheerful zeal, with perfect integrity, with manly resolution, and with an entire resignation to the decrees of Providence, lies the sum and essence of his duty."

Very different from this was the philosophy of Epicurus, which, however, proposed to itself the same end—the attainment of a perfect tranquillity of mind. The term by which he marked the object of his philosophy, contributed much to increase the number of his disciples. "The supreme happiness of man," said Epicurus, "consists in *pleasure*. To this centre tend all his desires; and this, however disguised, is the real

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object of all his actions. The purpose of philosophy is to teach whatever best conduces to the health of the body and of the mind; for where either is unsound or diseased, he can enjoy no true happiness or pleasure. As the health of the body is best secured by temperance, and the refraining from all hurtful gratifications of the senses, so the health of the mind is best promoted by the practice of virtue, and the exercise of the benovolent and social affections." Thus, the term pleasure, as explained by Epicurus, involves nothing unworthy of the pursuit of the good and virtuous. Epicurus himself is said to have been a man of worth and probity, and it is a certain fact that some of the most virtuous of the ancients were the professed disciples of his system. But that the principle of his philosophy is unsound, needs no other proof than this; that if *pleasure* is admitted to be man's chief object of pursuit, every man must be allowed to be the best judge of what constitutes his *pleasure*, and will determine, according to his own feelings, from what sources it is to be drawn. The practice of temperance might have been the pleasure of Epicurus; and we are told that it was so, and that his favourite diet, and what he usually presented to his guests, was bread and water. But it is the chief pleasure of others to be intemperate and voluptuous. It might have been the chief pleasure of Epicurus to be honest and just in his dealings, but others find pleasure in fraud and chicane. In short, there is no vice or crime that might not find an apology, or rather a recommendation. Had it not afforded pleasure it would not have been

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practised or committed. "If it is allowable for me," we shall suppose the disciple of Epicurus to say to his master,—"If it is allowable for me to pursue pleasure as my chief object, it is, of consequence, allowable for me to be vicious, if I find pleasure in it." "But you are punished," says Epicurus, "in the consequence; and you will find vice productive of pain instead of pleasure." "Of that," says the disciple, "I take my risk: I look to the consequence, and I find it overbalanced by my present gratification: I find pleasure in this action, notwithstanding the hazard of its consequence: it is therefore allowable for me to commit it." Epicurus must grant that the conclusion is fair and legitimate.

Equally erroneous with his system of morality, was Epicurus's system of nature. An infinite number of atoms existing from all eternity in an infinite space, and continually in motion, were the elements of that matter of which the universe is composed; but this universe, thus composed of atomical or indivisible parts, has subsisted in its present form from all eternity; and ever will subsist. It is, therefore, of necessary existence, and we have no need to resort to the power of a Creator to account for its origin, or to the wisdom of a Deity for its maintenance and government. But though the notion of a Deity did not enter into the system of Epicurus, to any active effect, he did not deny that the Gods might exist. He professed even to teach that an order of eternal essences, clothed with a species of body, and endowed with senses for the perception of pleasure, resided in some superior region of the universe,

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where they enjoyed a serene and infinitely happy existence, unalloyed by any knowledge or perception of the affairs of this material world, and undisturbed by any care or concern for its inhabitants. A religious creed, which, as Cicero well observes, is but a mask for absolute atheism, and which its author could have no other reason for propounding, than the servile fear of incurring danger from the open avowal of impiety*.

From the foregoing brief account of the different sects or schools of philosophy in Greece, I shall draw only two reflections: The one is, that with a very few exceptions, and more particularly that of the sect last mentioned, amidst all the errors incident to the mind unenlightened by revealed religion, the reason of mankind has, in all ages, looked up to a supreme, intelligent, and omnipotent Being—the Author of our existence —the Creator and the Governor of the universe: a belief which forces itself upon the most uncultivated understanding, and which the advancement of the intellectual powers tends always to strengthen and confirm. The other reflection is, that, from the great variety and opposition of those systems which we have enumerated of the Greek philosophers, we may perceive among that people a liberal spirit of toleration in matters of opinion, which stopped short at absolute irreligion and impiety; and a freedom of judgment, in all matters of philosophical speculation, which did honour to their national character, and the genius of their legislative systems. If the Greek philosophers did

* Cic. *de Nat. Deor.* lib. i. in fine.

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not attain to truth, or to the perfection of science, they had, at least, the road open before them; and their errors may afford useful instruction to the moderns, by ascertaining the limits of the mental powers on matters of abstract speculation, by dispelling prejudices, simplifying the objects of investigation and discovery, and bringing the rational and candid inquirer nearer to the ends of his pursuit.



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# BOOK THE THIRD.

## CHAPTER I.

THE ROMAN HISTORY—Earliest Periods of the History of Rome—Etruscans—Foundation of Rome—Disputed Accounts of—Romulus—Rape of the Sabines—Origin of the Political Institutions of the Romans—Union with the Sabines—Numa—His Institutions—Tullus Hostilius—Ancus Martius—Tarquinius Priscus.

OF the precise era when the country of Italy was peopled, we have no certain accounts, nor anything beyond probable conjecture. There seem, however, good grounds to believe that this peninsula, enjoying great advantages of situation, soil, and climate, was very early a populous country, and inhabited in one quarter even by a refined and polished nation, many ages before the Roman name was known. This people was known by the appellation of Etrurians or Etruscans, though their more ancient designation is said to have been Tyrrheni, from the name of a Lydian prince who brought with him a colony of his countrymen from the lesser Asia, and planted that part of Italy afterwards called Etruria. Of the early history of this people there remain but a few detached and obscure traces to be found in the ancient authors; but there is reason to believe that, like all other colonies, their progress to civilisation was much more rapid than that of an aboriginal people, that the Etruscans were in a very advanced state



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of improvement in manners and the arts while the surrounding nations or tribes in the centre of Italy were yet extremely barbarous. The Roman historians acknowledge this fact. Livy speaks of the Etruscans as a great and opulent people in Italy, powerful both at land and sea, before the origin of the Roman state. Dionysius of Halicarnassus deduces most of the religious institutions of the Romans from Etruria. Augury and divination, which were essential ingredients in most of their ceremonies and mysteries, were certainly derived from that country, as probably were the first dawnings of Roman science and literature. The religion of the Etruscans was polytheism, and many of their deities were common to them with the Greeks, as those of the latter with the divinities of the Phœnicians and other Asiatic nations. The Roman theogony can easily be traced to those origins. The Cabirian mysteries of the Romans, the Mithriac and Acherontic ceremonies, were all immediately derived from Etruria. The Etruscan alphabet, nearly that of the Phœnicians, was likewise used by the Romans in the early ages of their state. The gradual change from this ancient alphabet to the characters used by the Romans in the latter periods, may be distinctly traced by the series of *inscriptions* yet remaining.

The ancient Etrurians are celebrated for their knowledge of astronomy, which countenances the notion of their Asiatic origin. They had successfully cultivated poetry and music. Scenical representations were in great repute among them; and the first comedians who appeared at Rome were brought from that country, on occasion of a

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pestilence, either from a superstitious idea of appeasing the wrath of the gods, or the humbler, though not less rational motive of supporting the spirits of the people under the general calamity.

It is probable the Etruscans had made great progress in the fine arts of sculpture and painting, and the practice of these arts presupposes a very high state of civilisation. The elegance of the Etruscan vases, and the beautiful painting which decorates them, are subjects of just admiration and of zealous imitation by the moderns. Of this art, the fabric of pottery, the ancient authors agree in attributing the invention to this people*, and none other appears ever to have carried it to so high a pitch of perfection. Architecture, engraving of precious stones, sculpture, and painting, were of high antiquity among the Etruscans at the time when the Greeks were comparatively in a state of barbarism. The Etruscans were a declining people at the time of the foundation of Rome, though possessing many reliques of their ancient grandeur, both in their knowledge of the arts and in their manners. The Romans were mere barbarians; but they had the good sense to copy after and adopt many improvements from their polished neighbours.

The country of Etruria, as we learn from Dionysius, was divided into twelve districts, each of which was ruled by a separate chief, called in the Etruscan language *Lucumo*. Of these lucumones

* Tatianus, in his oration to the Greeks, in which he reproaches them with their vanity in attributing to themselves the invention of all arts, affirms positively that the Etruscans taught them the art of pottery; Clemens Alexandrinus makes the same assertion.

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we find frequent mention in Livy. Each had a sovereign jurisdiction in his province; but the whole were united in a confederacy, and held a general diet or council on all occasions in which the common interest was concerned. To give greater efficacy to this union, it appears that, at least in time of war, the whole nation obeyed a common chief, who was elected probably by the whole of the lucumones. Livy informs us that no single state could engage in war or conclude peace without the consent of the whole Etruscan body. The principal towns of Etruria were Volscinii, Clusium, Cortona, Perusia, Falerii, Tarquinii, and Veii. These, with several others mentioned by Dionysius, were populous and flourishing states before the common era of the foundation of Rome*.

This polished people, inhabiting the centre of Italy, was surrounded by a great number of petty

* The Etruscans were, like their Phœnician ancestors, a maritime and mercantile people. Hence the fable invented by the Greeks, and sung by Ovid, that the Tyrrhenians were turned into dolphins. They colonised all along the coast of Italy, and built many large towns, during the splendid period of their history. But this was of short continuance. A dreadful pestilence and famine, as Dionysius informs us (lib. i. c. 15, 16), desolated their country about the period of the Trojan war. These calamities were recorded in a poem found on certain tablets of brass, called the Eugubine Tables, which were discovered, A.D. 1444, in a subterraneous vault near the ancient theatre of Iguvium or Eugubium, now Gubbio, a city of Umbria. The poem is written in Pelasgian characters. This lamentation, with an interpretation by M. Gori, may be found in 'Sir William Hamilton's Etruscan Antiquities;' and it is inferred from various circumstances to be 247 years more ancient than the works of Hesiod.

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nations, who seem to have been in a state little removed from barbarism. The Umbrians, the Ligurians, the Sabines, the Picentes, the Latins, appear at the time of the supposed foundation of the Roman state to have been a set of independent tribes, who were engaged in constant hostilities with each other. The territory called *Latium* extended in length about fifty miles, and in breadth about sixteen. It contained no less than forty-seven independent communities. The other adjacent provinces were divided in the same manner—a state of society in which constant warfare is unavoidable; a warfare, however, of which conquest or extension of power is not the object, but which arises merely from the spirit of plunder and depredation. Their enterprises, therefore, were limited to ravaging the fields, carrying off the flocks and herds, destroying the harvest of their neighbours, or such like rude and barbarous achievements. The desire of conquest has no place in such a state of society;—for a victory can never be pursued or the conquered territory preserved: as the whole community is obliged to be active for its subsistence, and agriculture is of course suspended while the nation is at war, the soldier must quit his arms for the plough and spade, for a lengthened campaign would produce a famine. It is only where acquired wealth and increased population can afford regular armies of professional soldiers, that conquests can be prosecuted and maintained. The Etruscans seem to have enjoyed these advantages over all the barbarous nations around them, and consequently they were in a capacity to have subdued the whole of them; but their genius

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was not warlike: they were fond of and cultivated the arts of peace; and though occasionally engaged in hostilities with the Romans, they appear never to have armed but when attacked.

The gradual increase of population among a warlike tribe may enable them to preserve their conquests, either by garrisoning, or by transplanting a part of the conquered inhabitants into the capital, and replacing them by a colony of citizens. This we shall see was afterwards the policy of the Romans, and thus by degrees they extended their territory and increased their power. But sometimes a flourishing people is compelled to colonise, from an overgrowth of its population. Dionysius of Halicarnassus informs us of the manner in which a state, when it became overstocked, transplanted its colonies. They consecrated to a particular god all the youth of a certain age, furnished them with arms, and after the performance of a solemn sacrifice, dismissed them to conquer for themselves a new country. These enterprises were, no doubt, often unsuccessful; but when they succeeded, and an establishment was obtained, it does not appear that the mother state pretended to have any rights over them, or claims upon the country where they settled.

The origin of the Roman state is involved in great obscurity, and various accounts are given of the foundation of that illustrious city, which differ not only as to the time of its structure, but in all circumstances concerning it. To reconcile in some degree these discrepancies, it is the notion of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that there were at different periods several cities which bore the name

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of Rome; that the Rome founded some time after the Trojan war was destroyed, and another built in the first year of the seventh Olympiad, that is, 752, B.C.; nay, he pretends to find evidence even of a more ancient Rome than either of these, but in what situation or period of time he does not determine. Whoever wishes to see all the different accounts of this matter, and to be convinced how little certainty there is in any one of them, may consult the learned dissertations of M. Pouilly and of the Abbé Sallier, in the sixth volume of the *Mémoires de l' Académie des Inscriptions.* The vulgar and generally received account of the foundation of Rome by Romulus, is not upon the whole entitled to any degree of credit superior to the rest; but as it was commonly adopted by the Romans themselves, and has passed current down to modern times, it is proper to be acquainted with it, whatever doubt we may entertain of its authenticity.

Rome, according to the chronology of Archbishop Usher, was founded 752 years before the Christian era. Romulus, at the head of a troop of shepherds, his followers, is said to have built a few huts upon the Palatine Hill, in a part of the territory of Alba; but as it is not very probable that shepherds should assemble to the number of 3000, it is natural to suppose them to have been banditti or freebooters, accustomed to wander and to ravage; and the increase of their numbers, while it furnished the means, probably suggested the idea, of occupying and fortifying an inclosed territory for themselves. To strengthen the new community, and to fill the space which they had marked out for their city, their chief proclaimed

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an asylum for all such fugitives and deserters from the neighbouring states as chose to put themselves under his protection, and acknowledge his authority.

Hitherto, this new association consisted solely of men; it was necessary they should provide themselves with women. The story of the rape of the Sabines has much the air of romance; though it derives a degree of credit from the festival of the *Consualia*, instituted in honour of the *God Consus*, the protector of plots; a solemnity which was always believed at Rome to have commemorated that exploit. Romulus proclaimed a great festival and games in honour of Neptune, to which he invited all the neighbouring states. The Sabines*, Cecinians, Crustuminians, and Antemnates, came thither in great troops. The plan was concerted, and, at a certain signal, a chosen band rushed in and carried off a great number of the women. The Sabines, and the nations in their alliance, prepared immediately to avenge this outrage; and the infant commonwealth of Rome was, almost at the moment of its formation, at war with all its neighbours.

The Roman historians, to flatter the vanity of their countrymen, have been extremely lavish of encomium on the high character of Romulus, whom

* The Sabines were an ancient people of Italy, situated between Etruria and Latium. Their capital was *Cures* in the territory now called Corezze. The inhabitants of *Cecina*, *Crustuminium*, and *Antemnæ*, were probably either subjects or allies of the Sabine state. From Cures, the capital city of the Sabines, the Romans, after their union with that people, took the appellation of *Curites* or *Quirites*.

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they paint with all the qualities of a consummate politician and legislator. But if even the Greeks, at this time with far greater advantages, were extremely rude and uncivilised, what ideas can we form of the people of Latium, and their knowledge of the arts of government and legislation? There is certainly very little probability that a troop of banditti should all at once assume the form of a regular political structure, or that a great legislator should appear in the person of a freebooter, or of a shepherd, at the age of eighteen. The sounder opinion certainly seems to be, that those wise and politic laws and institutions commonly ascribed to Romulus arose gradually from ancient usages and a state of manners prevalent in Italy before the foundation of Rome.

If, however, we can suppose Romulus to have been in fact the founder of this new kingdom, its constitution would certainly prove that he had wise and politic views. He knew, in the first place, the character and temperament of the people he governed, and was well aware that their rude and ferocious spirit would not brook the unlimited authority of a despot. It was therefore a judicious plan to admit the people to a share in the government.

He divided the mass of population into *three tribes*, and each tribe into *ten curiæ*. Of the lands belonging to the state, he formed three great portions: one appropriated to the support of religion, which is an essential instrument of good government; another destined for the public service of the state; and the third he distributed equally among the thirty curiæ, so that each Roman citizen

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should have two acres of land. He formed a *senate* or council, composed of a hundred of the elders, to whom he gave power to see the laws enforced, to consult concerning all affairs of state, and to report their opinion to the people in the *comitia* or assemblies, who were invested with the right of final determination in all matters of public importance.

From these first senators (*centum patres*) chosen by Romulus were descended those families at Rome termed *patrician;* so that in a very little time a great distinction of rank arose from birth among the Romans.

It has indeed been supposed by Dionysius, that the distinction of patricians and plebeians was anterior to the formation of the senate, and that the one title was given to the richer, and the other to the poorer class of citizens. But whence can we suppose this inequality of wealth to have arisen, when the same author admits that there was an equal distribution among the whole citizens of those lands, in which alone their wealth could consist?

Although Romulus gave great weight to the scale of the people in the framing of this new government, yet he reserved to himself, as head of the community, very ample powers. The deliberations and decrees of the senate guided the resolutions of the people, and the king had the power of naming all the senators. He had likewise the privilege of assembling the people, and a right of appeal lay to him in all questions of importance. He had the command of the army, which at first comprehended the whole body of the people. He was chief priest,

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too, or *pontifex maximus*, and regulated every thing that concerned or was even remotely connected with religion; and, with a very wise policy, he took care that all that regarded the rule and economy of the state was so connected.

Romulus chose for the guard of his person twelve lictors, to whom he afterwards joined a troop of 300 horsemen, named *celeres*. This was the origin of the *equites*, or Roman knights, who became the second rank in the state after the patricians. From the three tribes into which he divided the people, Romulus selected from each tribe a hundred of the handsomest of the youth, of whom he formed three companies of cavalry. This body of the *equites* was augmented by Tarquinius Priscus to 1800; and in that distribution of the citizens which we shall afterwards see was made by Servius Tullius, these eighteen centuries were placed in the first class. These *equites* were at first chosen by the kings alone, as being the royal life-guards; and at the end of the regal government, being now a rank in the state, the consuls, who succeeded to almost the whole of the regal power, filled up the order of *equites* as they did that of the senate. In succeeding times, when the consuls became too much engrossed in military concerns, the function of supplying both those orders devolved on the censors, of whose office I shall speak more particularly when arrived at that period when those magistrates were first instituted. The marks of distinction peculiar to the order of knights were a horse maintained at the public expense, a ring of gold, and a garment with a narrow border of purple, called *angustus clavus*, in distinction from

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the *latus clavus* of the senators, which had a broader border of purple. It was reckoned a great indecorum for a knight to appear in public without his proper badges. The duties and functions of the *equites* were various in different periods of the republic: they were at first only a military order, and formed the cavalry of the Roman legions; afterwards, in the time of the *Gracchi*, we find them a class of civil judges, and no longer a military order. Sylla again, in his arrangement of the republic, deprived the *equites* of their judicial tribunals, and they became the financiers-general of the revenues of the state.

If many of those institutions we have mentioned owed their origin to the political talents of Romulus, several of them plainly appear to have a strong conformity with the general usages of barbarous nations; and others, which argue a more refined policy, were borrowed in all probability from the Etruscans: such in particular were those connected with religion.

The religion of ancient Italy was probably near akin to that of the Greeks; though Dionysius tells us that the early religious institutions of the Romans were not contaminated with those fables which disgraced the Greek theogony. The most scrupulous observance of omens and presages seems to have been the chief foundation of their sacred rites, and in this superstition they went far beyond the Greeks. Now divination we know with some certainty to have been adopted by the Romans from the Etruscans. Among that people everything was construed into a presage; not only the extraordinary phenomena of nature, as thun-

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der, lightning, the *aurora borealis*, or the like, but the most insignificant actions or accidents, such as sneezing, meeting with an animal, slipping a foot, or any of the most common occurrences of life. Among an ignorant and rude nation everything is attributed to a supernatural agency; but the Etrurians were not a rude nation, and therefore we can assign this national propensity only to their love of those national habits which they had derived from a remote antiquity. To a superstitious people, when presages do not offer of themselves, it is a very natural step to go and seek them. The sacrifice of victims presented often different appearances, according to the accidental state of the animal at the time it was killed. The priests employed in the sacrifice, being best acquainted with those appearances, are naturally consulted as to their interpretation. Thus they acquire the reputation of superior wisdom and foresight, and the *augur* and *aruspex* become an established profession. Where a society is once formed, it becomes interested to support itself; the trade is found lucrative, and the science of course is studiously made intricate and obscure, to exclude the attempts of uninitiated pretenders.

As bad omens presented themselves frequently as well as good, it became a desirable object of science to know how to avert the effect of the latter, and to convert them into presages of good fortune. The augurs pretended that they possessed this valuable secret, which gave them still greater influence over the minds of the people. This effect they operated by expiations, which thus became an essential branch of religious ceremonies.

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Gradually, as the art advanced, a particular set of ceremonies was appropriated to particular occasions. Thus, for example, at the foundation of a city, the priests and all employed in the ceremony first purified themselves by leaping over a fire. They then made a circular excavation, into which they threw the first fruits of the season, and some handfuls of earth brought from the native city by the founders. The entrails of victims were next consulted, and if favourable, they proceeded to trace the limits of the town with a line of chalk. This track they then marked by a furrow, with a plough drawn by a white bull and heifer. It was not anciently the custom to surround the city with walls, but the limits were defended by towers, placed at regular intervals. In aftertimes, however, the practice became common of fortifying the city by a wall. The ceremony was concluded by a great sacrifice to the tutelar gods of the city, who were solemnly invoked. These gods were termed *Patrii* and *Indigetes*, but their particular names were concealed with the most anxious caution from the knowledge of the people. It was a very prevalent superstitious belief that no city could be taken or destroyed till its tutelar gods abandoned it. Hence it was the first care of a besieging enemy to evoke the gods of the city or entice them out by ceremonies, by promising them superior temples and festivals, and a more respectful worship than they had hitherto enjoyed; but in order to accomplish this evocation it was necessary to learn the particular names of the deities, which every people therefore was interested to keep secret.

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As all the superstitions we have mentioned were common to the nations of Italy before the building of Rome, it was extremely natural that they should be adopted as part of its theology.

In treating formerly of the Spartan constitution, I have remarked the error of those theories which attempt to trace all political institutions whatever up to the manners of a savage state; or the belief that all forms of government, and, by the same rule, all the revolutions of those governments, are the result of the natural progress of mankind in society. The most limited knowledge of history gives us certain proof of many political systems being the operation of the genius of individual lawgivers. If we doubt as to the institutions of Lycurgus, of Charlemagne, or of Alfred, being as perfect as history has painted them, scepticism itself cannot refuse the instances of William Penn and of Peter the Great, any more than those stupendous experiments in government and legislation which our own age has witnessed.

But as to Romulus, we readily allow that the great outlines of his constitution have their model in the manners and usages of a semi-barbarous people. The *Patria potestas* of the Romans, or the sovereign power which every father of a family enjoyed over his household, may be plainly traced up to the manners of barbarians. So likewise many of the early laws of the Romans were the necessary result of their situation. Such, for example, was that law which confined the practice of all mechanic arts to the slaves; for all the free citizens must either have been employed in warfare or in the culture of their fields.



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But other institutions bear the stamp of political knowledge and enlargement of ideas. Such, for instance, is the *Clientela*, or the connexion of patrons and clients. To maintain a just subordination, and at the same time a mutual good understanding between the patrician order and the plebeians, every plebeian was allowed to choose a senator for his patron, whose duty it was to defend and protect him; and he in his turn received from his clients, not only homage, but support and assistance in all cases where his interest required it.

Notwithstanding the excellency of this political arrangement, the enemies which the infant state of Rome had raised up among the neighbouring nations of Italy would have been too powerful for her, if they had followed any united plan or general measures. The rape of the Sabine women had exasperated all around them; but as each nation, instead of uniting, attempted to pursue a separate plan of revenge, they were all successively defeated. The town of Cennina was destroyed, and its inhabitants transplanted to Rome. The Crustumenians, in like manner, contributed to increase the victorious city; though Romulus chose likewise to preserve their own city, and to establish a colony in it, thus gaining a double advantage. The Sabine nation was the most formidable of their enemies. In one successful assault upon the city, they had penetrated as far as the Tarpeian-hill, and a most obstinate conflict was maintained in the very heart of Rome, when the Sabine women, the cause of the war, threw themselves in between the contending parties and

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became the mediators between their husbands, and their fathers and brethren. Their influence prevailed; a peace was concluded, and the two nations agreed henceforth to become one people*. Tatius, king of the Sabines, was associated with Romulus in the government; a most wise and politic measure, which relieved Rome at once of her most formidable enemy, and greatly increased her strength and population. Thus, in a very few years from the period of her foundation, Rome was able to make head against the most powerful of the nations of Italy.

Tatius did not long enjoy his dignity. He was killed a few years afterwards at Lavinium, and Romulus remained sole monarch of the united people. He made war against the Veientes with success, and subdued several of the states of Latium: but having disobliged his soldiers in the distribution of the conquered lands, and some of the principal senators becoming jealous of his power, a conspiracy was formed against him, and he fell a victim to treason, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign. A violent storm of thunder happening at the time, favoured the report spread by the conspirators that he was killed by lightning; and the people who revered his memory enrolled him among the number of their deities by the title of Quirinus †.

* In honour of this event, a solemn annual festival was held at Rome on the first day of March, called *Matronalia*. It is to this solemnity that Horace alludes in his ode, *Martiis cælebs quid agam Calendis, &c.*

† Contemporary with Romulus was Hezekiah, the tenth king of Judah; and Salmanazar, who took Samaria, and put



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As Romulus left no children, the people judged the crown elective, and the question was whom to choose. The Sabines claimed an equal right with the Romans; and, there being much discordance of opinion, the senate, which was composed equally of both nations, laid claim to the sovereignty, and dividing themselves into Decuriæ, it was agreed that each decuria should reign fifty days, or each senator five days,—an arrangement which it was easy to see could not be permanent. The people submitted to it for a year, but at the end of that period declared their resolution to have a sovereign for life. It was agreed that the senators of the Roman party should have the right of electing, but that the choice should fall upon a Sabine. Numa the son-in-law of Tatius, a man of a recluse and reserved disposition, but of great reputation for wisdom and probity, was chosen king; and after a solemn consultation of the gods by the augurs and aruspices, was publicly invested with the regal *insignia* and authority.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus has represented Numa as a wise and most intelligent prince: others have disputed that character, on this extraordinary ground, that when the books of Numa were accidentally discovered at Rome, after the lapse of six centuries, the senate ordered them to be destroyed, as containing nothing which, in their judgment, could be useful, and much that might be of prejudice to the state. But this fact certainly warrants no inference unfavourable to the

an end to the kingdom of Israel, by carrying the ten tribes into captivity.

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character or to the talents of Numa. The political views and regulations of that prince might be extremely wise, and well adapted to the age in which he lived, and at the same time quite unsuitable to the spirit of the Roman constitution six centuries after him.

Numa was of a pacific turn, and he seems to have aimed at giving his people the same character. It may be doubted whether this policy were altogether wise in the situation in which the Romans stood with respect to their neighbours. The king pretended to enjoy a divine inspiration, and feigned that he was indulged in nightly conferences with the nymph Egeria, who dictated all those public measures which he proposed. He multiplied the national gods, built new temples, and instituted a great variety of religious ceremonies, of the most remarkable of which it is necessary, for the proper intelligence of the Roman history, that some short account should here be given.

A custom then prevailed in Italy, by which every state, before going to war, was in use to determine whether the cause of the war were just or unjust. When a quarrel arose between one state and another, certain heralds, named *Feciales*, were dispatched by the state which deemed itself injured to the aggressor, who publicly proclaimed the cause of offence, and demanded reparation of the injury. If the aggressor hesitated, ten days were allowed for deliberation, and that term was three times renewed. If at the end of that period justice was not done, the *Feciales* took the gods to witness of the wrong committed, and returned to their own city. War was then solemnly proclaimed

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—but was not commenced till one of the *Feciales* walked to the frontier, and threw a bloody javelin as a signal.

This custom shows that the petty nations of Italy, barbarous as they were, had just notions of the blessings of a pacific government. Numa adopted the custom, and instituted at Rome a college of *Feciales*. He built likewise a temple to *Janus*, which was kept open during war, and shut during peace. Most of the institutions of this prince were calculated to encourage the pacific spirit; but this was not the tendency of his people, and their character soon became quite the reverse. A great part of Numa's policy consisted in using religion as an instrument of government*. He instituted a college of priests called *Flamines*, from the flame-coloured tufts upon their caps†. Each flamen was confined to the worship of a particular god; and Romulus, now deified, had his flamen, as well as Jupiter and Mars. A sacred buckler, or *ancile*, which was said to have dropped from

* Yet the religion of Numa, according to Plutarch's account, was of a rational character, and quite remote from the superstitions of the vulgar. "He forbade the Romans (says that author) to represent the Deity in the form of man, or of any animal, nor was there any sculptured effigy of the gods admitted in those early times. During the first one hundred and sixty years, they built temples and shrines, but made no images; judging it impious to represent the most excellent of beings by things base and unworthy, since there is no access to the Divinity but by the mind, elevated and purified by Divine contemplation."

† Plutarch supposes the word *flamen* a corruption of *pilamen*, from *pileus*, a cap. There were at first only three Flamines, *Flamen Dialis*, *Martialis*, and *Quirinalis*.

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heaven, gave occasion likewise to the foundation of a new college of priests, who had the charge of it, and paraded with it, on particular occasions, in a kind of dance or procession. These were called Salii (*a saliendo*); and lest the sacred buckler should be stolen or lost, eleven others were made exactly resembling it, and deposited in the temple of Jupiter*.

The veneration of *fire* was a superstition common, as we have seen, to several of the ancient nations. The custom of preserving this element continually burning was religiously observed among the nations of Italy, as among their eastern progenitors. Numa found this custom among the people of Alba; and introducing it among the Romans, he built a temple consecrated to Vesta, and appointed four virgins to attend her worship, and to preserve the sacred fire. They took a vow of perpetual virginity, and were buried alive if they broke it. A punishment of this kind was extremely rare; but when it occurred it was a day of mourning to all the citizens. The ignominy of the crime was thought to affect all the relations of the criminal; and it was no wonder that, when a new vestal came to be chosen, every father dreaded lest the choice should fall upon his

* The *Salii* were originally twelve in number; but Tullus Hostilius, the successor of Numa, added other twelve. Those first instituted were called Salii Palatini, from the Palatine Hill, where they began their processions: the latter were termed *Collini*, or Agonenses, from the *Collis Quirinalis*, otherwise called *Agonalis*, where they had a chapel. Their endowments were great, and their entertainments costly; whence the phrase *Dapes Saliares* is used by Horace for delicate meats, lib. i. O. 37.

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daughter. On the other hand, these sacred virgins enjoyed very high privileges. They were superior in sanctity of character to all the priests, and in some respects even controlled the laws of their country. A vestal could save a criminal going to execution, provided she gave her word that she had met him only accidentally. It was customary for individuals to make large donations to vestals, from motives of piety, or to leave them great legacies; and thus they often accumulated much wealth.

Numa is celebrated for a reformation of the Roman calendar, which, it is said, made the year, before his time, consist only of ten months, of various lengths; some of them, according to Plutarch, consisting of twenty days, some of thirty-five, and some of a greater number. Numa added to the year the months of January and February, assigning to each month the number of days of which it consists at present. February being the most deficient, was always reckoned an unlucky month. He distinguished likewise certain days as *Fasti* and *Nefasti;* on the former of which it was lawful to follow all civil occupations, while nothing of that sort was allowed on the latter except agriculture, which thence seems most wisely to have been regarded in a religious point of view. From this distinction of *Dies Fasti et Nefasti,* the calendar itself took the name of *Fasti,* or annals. It was the office of the Pontifex Maximus to record in the *Fasti* the events of each year.

Numa died after a reign of forty-three years, during the whole of which time the temple of

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Janus remained shut; so much does the disposition of a people depend on the character of a sovereign *.

After a short interregnum, Tullus Hostilius was elected to the throne by the people, and confirmed by the voice of the senate. This prince, of a very opposite character from his predecessor, paid little regard to his religious and pacific institutions. The temple of Janus was opened, and was not shut during his whole reign. He was victorious over the Albans, Fidenates, and several of the other neighbouring states. In the war with the Albans happened the celebrated combat between the three Horatii and Curiatii, in which the issue of the contest was determined in favour of the Romans, by the courage and policy of the surviving Horatius. The victor, returning to Rome laden with the spoils of the vanquished, was met by his sister, the destined spouse of one of the Curiatii. On seeing the spoils of her dead lover, she vented her grief and indignation in such violent terms, that her brother put her to death. "Begone," said he, "to thy lover, and carry with thee that degenerate passion which makes thee prefer a dead enemy to the glory of thy country." The offender was brought before the *duumviri*, two criminal judges appointed by Tullus, and was by them condemned to death. By the advice of Tullus, he appealed to the assembly of the people, who, in compassion to the deliverer of his country, commuted his punishment to passing under the yoke, and at the

* Contemporary with Numa, was Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and Esarhaddon, who united the kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon.

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same time decreed him a trophy. This incident shows one fact of importance, namely, that the power of the people had at this time become paramount to that of the prince, and that the government truly lay in the joint concurrence of the regal authority with that of the several orders of the state.

Under the reign of Tullus, as we find the Romans at war with the Sabines, it appears that the union of the two nations was by this time dissolved; and, henceforward, we find the Sabines classed among those of the neighbouring states with whom the Romans carried on constant hostilities.

The neglect of religion during the reign of Tullus is said to have excited the vengeance of the gods, who punished the Romans by a severe pestilence. The king himself was seized with it, and became as pious as his predecessor; but his repentance was too late, for he was killed by thunder, or, as some authors report, by a fire in the city, after a reign of thirty-three years.

Ancus Martius, of Sabine extraction, was elected king in his place. He was, by his mother, grandson to Numa; and partook somewhat of his disposition. He bent all his attention to the revival of the religious observances of his ancestor; but the Latins obliged him to take up arms. The Romans were victorious, and took several of the enemy's towns, transporting the inhabitants to Rome, of which it became necessary to enlarge the bounds beyond the Aventine Mount. Ancus pushed his conquests along the banks of the Tiber to its mouth, where he built the city and port of

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Ostia. He fortified a small eminence opposite to Rome, on the western side of the Tiber, which was called *Janiculum*, and communicated with the city by a bridge, which the priests had the charge of supporting and repairing; and thence they are said to have derived their name of *Pontifices**.

Ancus died after a reign of twenty-four years. During his time, *Lucius Tarquinius*, surnamed *Priscus*, a native of Tarquinii in Etruria, and son of a rich citizen of Corinth, had come to Rome. He was a man of great address, and gained the favour both of the king and people; so that when the throne became vacant, he was chosen the successor of Ancus; a proof that the throne was considered as elective; for Ancus Martius had left two sons.

The senate, as first constituted by Romulus, consisted, as we have seen, of one hundred members. To this original number, from whom alone the patrician families claimed their descent, Romulus afterwards added another hundred. Tarquinius, who owed his election to the favour of some of the principle citizens, rewarded their services by adding a hundred new members to the senate, chosen from the plebeian order †. It remained at the number of 300 for several centuries, down to the period of the Gracchi, when it was enlarged to 600. I shall have occasion afterwards

* Contemporary with Ancus Martius were Draco, the Athenian legislator; Periander, tyrant of Corinth; and Napopolassar, king of Babylon, father to Nebuchadnezzar.

† These new senators were termed *Patres minorum gentium*; but this distinction was lost in process of time, and all were regarded as equal in point of rank.

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to treat more particularly of the constitution of this body.

Rome was now gradually advancing in population and power; but her progress was not so rapid as to alarm the other states of Italy. In the time of the elder Tarquin, there were frequent wars with the Sabines, Latins, and Etruscans, which generally terminated to the advantage of the Romans; but the vanquished nations were always very speedily in a condition to renew hostilities.

The city itself was increasing very much in extent and magnificence. Tarquin caused the walls to be built of hewn stone; he surrounded the *forum* with a covered corridor or arcades of pillars; he built the Circus Maximus, or Hippodrome, for the celebration of public games, for races and athletic exercises. This building was situate between the Aventine and Palatine hills. It was enlarged and embellished at different times; and in the age of the elder Pliny, was capable of containing 260,000 spectators, all seated. Tarquinius Priscus likewise constructed the *cloacæ*, those amazing drains or common sewers, which remain to this day the wonder of all who view them. The *cloaca maxima* is sixteen feet in width, thirteen in depth, and of hewn stone arched over. Works of this kind would seem to lead to the belief of a prodigious increase of this city in size and population, when such immense structures were formed within the period of 150 years from its foundation. But these appearances certainly afford rational ground for a different conclusion or conjecture. The immensity of those *cloacæ*, so unsuitable to such a city as we must suppose

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Rome to have been in the days of the elder Tarquin (for Livy acknowledges that they were judged unsuitable, from their large size, to the extent of the city, even in his time), naturally induces a suspicion, that those works were the remains of a more ancient and much more splendid city, on the ruins of which the followers of Romulus had chosen to settle. The like we know to have taken place in different parts of Asia, where several of the greatest cities of antiquity, after they had gone to decay, and been for ages desolate and uninhabited, have revived after a period of many centuries, and from villages grafted on their ruins, have become pretty considerable towns, though far inferior to their ancient size and magnificence. Were we here to offer a conjecture, it would be, that the foundation of Rome is to be carried back many ages beyond the commonly received era, and that this city had anciently been the residence of a part of that great and polished nation, the Etruscans.

Tarquin, during some of his wars, had vowed to erect a temple to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, but he lived only to see the work begun. In digging for the foundation of this structure, on the top of the Tarpeian hill, the skull of a man was found; a very ordinary occurrence, but which the augurs declared to be a presage that Rome was one day to become the head, or mistress of the universe. The new temple was from this incident called *Capitolium*. If the anecdote is true, it shows how early the Romans entertained views of empire and dominion.

Tarquin had adopted a young man, Servius, the

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son of a female captive, and had given him his daughter in marriage. He was a youth of talents, and soon gained the esteem both of the senators and people; so that there was every prospect of his succeeding to the throne upon the death of his father-in-law. Two sons of Ancus Martius were yet alive, who naturally looked likewise towards that dignity, to which they endeavoured to pave the way by assassinating Tarquinius Priscus. This treasonable act they perpetrated in the thirty-eighth year of his reign; but their crime did not meet with the reward of success *.

* In the time of the elder Tarquin, Nebuchadnezzar made the conquest of Jerusalem, and carried the Jews into captivity. Solon, in the same period, was employed in new modelling the constitution, and giving laws to the republic, of Athens.

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## CHAPTER II.

Servius Tullius, sixth King of Rome—His Political Talents —Artful Division of the People into Classes and Centuries —The Census—Lustrum—Tarquinius Superbus—End of the Regal Government—Reflections on this Period—Constitution of the Senate—Narrow Territory of the State—Exaggerated Accounts of its Military Force—Uncertainty of its early History.

SERVIUS TULLIUS had very naturally cherished the ambitious design of mounting the throne, upon the death of his father-in-law. On that event, he thought it prudent to employ some artifice. He gave out that the king, though dangerously wounded, was still alive, and had impowered him, in the mean time, to administer the government, and to bring to punishment his assassins. He procured, accordingly, a sentence of death to be pronounced on the sons of Ancus; but they escaped their fate by flying from Rome, and seeking an asylum among the Volscians. Servius thus rid of his competitors, proclaimed the king's death, and found no obstacle to his elevation to the vacant dignity.

As the succession of Servius had wanted all the usual formalities, there having been no regular election by the people, nor any inauguration by the usual consultation of the auspices, the new sovereign wisely bent his whole attention to ingratiating himself with his subjects by every method

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that could procure popularity. He paid the debts of the poorer citizens by dividing among them such lands as were his own property, and others of which they had been illegally deprived by the richer citizens. He adorned the city with useful edifices; he was successful in the wars carried on with the neighbouring nations; and the people, pleased with the moderation he showed in the exercise of power, soon forgot his usurpation.

It is remarked by Montesquieu, as one cause of the rapid advancement of Rome in the first ages of her state, that all her kings were great men. Servius Tullius was a prince possessed of superior political abilities. There is nothing more worthy of attention than the measures he took for the reformation of those abuses which had gradually arisen from the indeterminate nature of the Roman constitution, and particularly that artful and ingenious arrangement of the people into classes and centuries, by which he contrived to throw the whole power of the state into the hands of the superior order of citizens, without injury or offence at the same time furnished to a numerous populace, whose happiness is best consulted by removing them from all actual concern in the machine of government. Of this arrangement it is necessary for the proper intelligence of the revolutions of the Roman commonwealth that a particular account should here be given.

From the time that the Romans had associated the Sabines and the people of Alba to the rights of citizens, the urban and the rustic tribes were composed of three distinct nations, each of which had an equal share in the government. Each

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tribe being divided into ten *curiæ*, and each *curia* having an equal vote in the comitia or public assemblies, as every individual had in his *curia*, all questions were determined by the majority of the suffrages of individuals. There was no pre-eminence or distinction between the *curiæ*, and the order in which they gave their votes was determined by lot.

This was a very equitable and reasonable arrangement so long as there were few distinctions among the citizens, and no great inequality of fortunes. But when riches came to be unequally distributed, it was easy to foresee numberless inconveniences from this equality of power. The indigent or the worthless would court every revolution which gave them a chance of bettering their fortunes; and the rich had an easy road to the gratification of the most dangerous ambition by purchasing by bribery the votes of the poor.

One grievance, likewise, which was very severely felt under the former constitution, was, that all taxes were paid by the head, without regard to the unequal wealth of individuals. This impolitic and unjust distribution, of which the poor had the highest reason to complain, furnished Servius with an excellent pretence for effecting that reformation which he meditated. He undertook to remove easily the poorer citizens from all share in the government, by exempting them from all public burdens, and making these fall solely on the rich.

After explaining to the people at large the necessity as well as the justice of regulating the taxes and contributions of individuals according to



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their measure of wealth, he required, by a public edict, that each citizen should declare, upon oath, his name, his dwelling, the number of his children, their age, and the value of his whole property, under the penalty of having his goods confiscated, being publicly scourged, and sold for a slave.

After this numeration, which was called *census*, Servius divided the whole body of the citizens, without distinction of rank, birth, or nation, into *four tribes*, named, from the quarters where they dwelt, *Palatine, Suburran, Collatine*, and *Esquiline*. These comprehended only such as dwelt within the city. He formed other *tribes* of such as enjoyed the privilege of Roman citizens, but lived without the walls, or in the country. Of these the number is uncertain, some authors making the rustic tribes amount to fifteen, others to seventeen, and others again to twenty-six. The number probably varied, according as the Romans extended their frontier. These rustic tribes are frequently mentioned in the Roman history. It is only necessary to remark at present, that in early times it was held more honourable to be included in those of the city; but this distinction did not always continue.

Besides this local division from the places where the different citizens had their dwelling-houses, Servius divided the whole body of the people into six *classes*, and each class into several *centuries*; but these classes did not each contain the same number of centuries. It is to be observed that a century was so termed, not as in itself consisting of one hundred men, but as being obliged to furnish and to maintain that number of soldiers for

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the service of the state, in time of war. In the first class there were no less than ninety-eight centuries. These were the richest citizens; such as were worth at least 100 *minæ*, about 300*l.* sterling. The second class consisted of twenty-two centuries, and comprehended such as were worth 75 *minæ*, about 225*l.* sterling. The third class contained twenty centuries, of such as were worth 50 *minæ*, or 150*l.* sterling. The fourth, of twenty-two centuries, or such as were worth half that sum; and in the fifth were thirty centuries of those worth 12 *minæ*, or 36*l.* sterling. The last class, though the most numerous of the whole, formed but a single century; and under this class were comprehended all the poor citizens. Thus the whole body of the Roman people was divided into one hundred and ninety-three centuries—or portions of citizens so termed, as furnishing and supporting each one hundred soldiers in time of war. The last class, the poor citizens, were exempted from all taxes and public burdens; they were called *Capite Censi*, as only making up a number; or were sometimes termed *Proletarii*, as contributing to the use of the state only by raising progeny. The other classes were rated for their proportions of the public taxes, at so much for each century. The military centuries of the different classes formed separate bodies of distinct rank; those of the first class being the highest, and those of the last the lowest; they were distinguished likewise by the arms they bore. The one-half of each century of soldiers, namely, those above forty-five years of age, were reserved for the protection of the city.



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It was very evident that the poorer citizens had no reason to complain of this new establishment, which exempted the greater part from all taxes, and proportioned the burdens of the rest to their share of wealth; but there was something necessary to indemnify and conciliate the rich. For this purpose, Servius ordained that in future the people should be assembled and give their votes by centuries; the first class, consisting of ninety-eight centuries, always having the precedence in voting. Such was the arrangement of the *Comitia Centuriata*, in which, henceforward, the chief magistrates were elected, the laws framed, peace and war resolved on, and, in a word, in which the supreme power of the state was vested. The *Comitia Curiata*, where the people were assembled by *Curiæ*, were now held only for the election of some of the priests, and a few of the inferior magistrates. The *Comitia* were held in the *Campus Martius*, without the city. The people walked thither preceded by their officers and *insignia*, in all the order of a military procession, but without arms. The king alone had the power of calling these assemblies, after consulting the auspices.

As in the *Comitia Centuriata* all the centuries, or the whole body of the people, were called to the assembly, the whole of the citizens seemed to have an equal share in the public deliberations. Yet this was far from being the case. The poorer classes came necessarily to be deprived of all influence in the public measures: for as there were in all the six classes one hundred and ninety-three centuries, and the first class consisted of no less than ninety-eight of these, who always gave their

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votes first, if these were of one mind, which generally happened in important questions, the suffrages of the rest were of no avail, and were not asked. If the first class was not unanimous, the second came to have a vote; but there was very rarely any opportunity for the inferior classes to exercise their right of suffrage. Thus the whole power of the state was artfully removed from the body of the people at large to the richer classes; and such was the ingenuity of this policy, that all were pleased with it. The rich were willing to pay for their influence in the state, and the poor were glad to exchange authority for immunities. They were satisfied with the appearance of consequence which they enjoyed by being called to the *Comitia;* and it was not till ambitious men, to use them as instruments, for their own designs, rendered them jealous of their situation, that they began to express any discontent.

The *Census* was concluded by a ceremony called *Lustrum*, or an expiation. The king presided at the sacrifice of a bull, a ram, and a hog, which were first led three times round the Campus Martius. Hence the sacrifice was called *Suovetaurilia*, or sometimes *Taurilia*. It was performed every *five* years, and thence that period was termed *Lustrum*.

Religion had been the earliest bond of union among the states of Greece. Temples had been erected at the common charge of the different republics, which accustomed them to consider themselves as one nation. After this model Servius undertook to unite the states of Latium. In order that they might regard Rome as a metropolis, he

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persuaded them to build at their common charges a magnificent temple to Diana on the Aventine Mount, and to repair thither once a year to perform sacrifice. Thus the Romans contracted a strict alliance with the Latian states, which mainly contributed to increase their power. Servius was a genuine and enlightened patriot. In all the changes which he operated on the constitution of the state, he had no other end than the public good. Of the disinterested nature of his conduct he had prepared to give the most effectual demonstration, by resigning the crown, and returning to the condition of a private citizen, when, to the regret of his subjects, he fell a victim to the most atrocious treason. His infamous daughter, Tullia, married to Tarquinius, the grandson of Priscus, conspired with her husband to dethrone and put to death her father; and this excellent prince was assassinated after a reign of forty-four years.

Tarquinius had gained the throne by the foulest of crimes, and he resolved to secure himself in it by violence. He acquired from his manners the surname of *Superbus*, pride being the usual attendant of tyranny and cruelty. Montesquieu has attempted to vindicate the character of this tyrant, and even to eulogise his virtues, as Lord Orford has displayed his talents in a vindication of our English Tarquin, Richard III., and both nearly with the same success. We may admire the ingenuity of the advocate who tries his powers in such arduous attempts, but we cannot judge them entitled to praise. Let the man of ingenuity stand forth as the champion of virtue, which too often suffers from the envenomed tooth of envy and detraction. In this

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benevolent office he will find abundant scope and exercise for his talents: but to lessen the criminality of the avowedly vicious—to exculpate from one or from a few slight offences where the blackest crimes have deservedly consigned a character to infamy—in such attempts there is much demerit; for the salutary horror of vice is thus weakened and diminished, and virtue herself is defrauded by lessening the value of her just reward.

The government of Tarquinius was regulated by principles totally opposite to those of his predecessor. He was in every sense a despot. With considerable military talents, he was successful in his wars against the Volsci and Sabines, the Latins of Gabii, and other enemies of the Roman state; and he used these conquests to ingratiate himself with the soldiery, to whom he allowed free scope to ravage and plunder in the course of hostilities; but the daily encroachments which he made on the liberties of all ranks in the state, and the extreme severity and cruelty he displayed in support of an arbitary controul, soon rendered him the object of universal detestation. The more powerful of the citizens, who from their influence with the people excited the fears and jealousy of the tyrant, were on various pretences arraigned and put to death. Others, against whom there was no pretext for a judicial accusation, were privately assassinated. Thus he put to death the father and the brother of *Lucius Junius*, two of the most respectable of the citizens. Lucius himself, to escape a similar fate, counterfeited fatuity, and thence acquired the denomination of *Brutus*.

This most sanguinary tyrant, whose enormous

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offences daily called for vengeance from an injured people, was yet suffered to reign for twenty-four years, and was at length punished for a crime which was not his own. His son Sextus, equally lawless and flagitious, had committed a rape on Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, and the injured matron, unable to survive her dishonour, stabbed herself in the presence of her husband and kindred. Brutus, a witness to this shocking scene, drew the dagger from her breast, and swore by the eternal gods to be the avenger of her death—an oath immediately taken by all who were present. The dead body of the violated Lucretia was brought into the forum, and Brutus throwing off his assumed disguise of insanity, appeared the passionate advocate of a just revenge, and the animated orator in the cause of liberty against tyrannical oppression. The people were roused in a moment, and were prompt and unanimous in their procedure. Tarquinius was at this time absent from the city, engaged in a war with the Rutulians. The senate was assembled, and pronounced a decree which banished for ever the tyrant, and at the same time utterly abolished the name and office of king. This decree was immediately confirmed by the people in the Comitia, who at the same time added to it a tremendous sanction, devoting to the infernal gods every Roman who should by word or deed endeavour to counteract or invalidate it.

Such was the end of the regal government at Rome, which had subsisted for 244 years. On this first period of the Roman history I shall here offer a few reflections.

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The constitution of the Roman government was at first nominally monarchical; but in fact the kings of Rome seem to have enjoyed but a very moderate share of those powers which ordinarily attend the monarchical government. We have seen that the regal dignity was elective, and that the choice resided in the people. It was the senate who most frequently proposed the laws, but it was the people in their Comitia who ratified them; nor could the king, without consent of the people, proclaim war or peace. These rights of the people we find acknowledged by the people without dispute; nor does it appear, till the reign of the last Tarquin, that any attempts were made, upon the part of the throne, to extend the monarchical authority so limited and restrained.

A constitution thus attempered is not naturally the result of the first union of a savage tribe; and hence has arisen the idea of extraordinary political abilities in the founder of this monarchy, Romulus, to whom several writers have chosen to attribute the whole formation of a system which it is more reasonable to believe was the slow growth of time and of experience. With these authors, no lawgiver is supposed to have ever proceeded upon a more extensive acquaintance with the nature of the political establishments of different states, or a juster estimate of their merits and defects, than Romulus, a youth of eighteen, in that system of regulations which he laid down for those rude shepherds or robbers whom he is said to have assembled and formed into a community.

These romantic notions have, I believe, originated in a great measure from an implicit reliance

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on the account of the origin of the Roman state given by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whose work, however ingenious, and in many respects estimable, is by no means to be relied on as a sure authority in tracing the early history of Rome, which he himself confesses that he has founded chiefly upon ancient fables, treated with neglect or passed over by other writers. Indeed the fables which he relates carry their own confutation along with them; for what fiction can be more absurd and incredible than to suppose an ignorant and rude youth, the leader of a gang of banditti, or the chief of a troop of shepherds, immediately after he had reared the turf walls of his projected city, calling together his followers and delivering a laboured and methodical oration on the nature of the different kinds of government, such as he had heard existed in Greece and other nations, desiring his hearers seriously to weigh the advantages and defects of those different political constitutions, and modestly concluding with a declaration that he is ready to accede with cheerfulness to whatever form they, in their aggregate wisdom, may decree? On this absurd fiction Dionysius rears the structure of a finely attempered constitution, all at once framed and adopted by this troop of barbarians; a beautiful system, judiciously blending monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Dionysius, however, has, with singular injudiciousness, discredited his own authority, by making a foolish parade of the motives which induced him to compile his history. He owns that his chief object was to render his work a pleasing and popular composition; something that might flatter the pride of the Romans,

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and inspire his own countrymen, the Greeks, with a high idea of the dignity of their conquerors. "The Greeks," says he, "deceived by vulgar report, imagined that the founders of Rome were barbarians, and vagabonds without house or home, and those too the slaves and dependents of their leader. To efface these impressions from the minds of my countrymen, and engage them to entertain more just notions, so as not to repine at being subject to a people who, from superiority of merit, have a natural right to the dominion over all others, I undertake this work. Let them cease to accuse fortune of this dispensation, since it is agreeable to an eternal law of nature that the strong should be the rulers of the weak. My countrymen will now learn from history that Rome had scarcely sprung into existence when she began to produce myriads of men, than whom no state, either Grecian or barbarian, ever reared more pious, more just, more temperate, more brave, or more skilful in war.—But these wonderful men" continues he, "are unknown to the Greeks from the want of an historian worthy to record their merits*". It will be readily allowed that a preface of this nature is not fitted to increase our opinion either of the truth, the candour, or even the judgment of the historian.

To return:—The notions, therefore, which some modern writers, relying on the authority of Dionysius, have adopted, of the wonderful political talents of Romulus, and that judicious temperament he is supposed to have made between the

* Dionys. Hal., Ant. Rom., lib. i.

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power of the sovereign, the authority of the senate, and the rights of the people, seem to be little else than a chimæra. The first political institutions of the Roman state were, like those of every other, simple and inartificial; suited to the immediate wants, and corresponding to the exigencies of a rude tribe, first forming itself into a regular community; but of whom, individual members had probably been the exiles or fugitives from a state enjoying some degree of civilisation and subject to laws and institutions, which they were thus enabled to impart to the new society they had agreed to form, and of which they had chosen Romulus to be the chief, or sovereign. The fabric of the Roman government, such as we find it within the period of any history we can deem authentic, was like every other, the gradual result of circumstances, the fruit of time and of political emergency.

The early constitution of the Roman senate has given occasion to much learned disquisition. The most judicious writers have candidly confessed, that, with regard to the original mode of electing its members, they pretend to nothing more than conjecture; as the ancient authors have been sparing in their information, extremely obscure, and often contradictory in their accounts. The most probable opinion seems to be that of the Abbé Vertot—that, during the regal government, the kings had the sole right of nominating the senators; that the consuls succeeded them in this power; and that, when these magistrates became too much engaged in war to attend to domestic policy, that privilege devolved upon the censors.

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The senators were, at first, always chosen out of the order of the patricians; that is, out of those families descended from the first *Centum Patres*, who are supposed to have been named by Romulus. But afterwards, the right of election to that dignity became common to the people, and was among the first of those privileges to which they obtained an equal title with the patricians. The authority of the senate, in the first ages of the commonwealth, was very extensive. No assembly of the people could be held but in consequence of their decree; nor could such assembly take any matter under consideration that had not first been debated in the senate. It was even necessary, in order to give the *Plebiscita*, or *decrees of the people*, any effect, that they should be confirmed by a second decree of the senate; and hence, with apparent justice, the government of the Romans, during the earlier times of the republic, has been termed rather an *aristocracy* than a democracy.

From this exorbitant power of the senate the first diminutions were made by the tribunes of the people, as we shall soon see; but this was not without a violent and lasting struggle on the part of the senate to maintain what had been their original rights: those privileges, however, which remained always in the senate, and which the people never pretended to call in question, were very extensive. The senate always continued to have the direction of every thing that regarded religion: they had the custody of the public treasure, and the absolute disposal of it: they gave audience to ambassadors, decided the fate

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of vanquished nations, disposed of the governments of the provinces, and took cognisance, by appeal, of all crimes committed throughout the empire. In one particular, upon great emergencies, their authority was truly supreme and despotical. In times of imminent danger, the senate issued its decree, *Dent operam Consules, ne quid Respublica detrimenti capiat;* a decree which gave to these chief magistrates a supreme and unlimited power for the time, independent both of the senate which conferred it, and of the people. Such were the acknowledged powers of the Roman senate through the whole period of the commonwealth. It was, in fact, a perpetual council, whose province it was to superintend all the magistrates of the state, and to watch over the safety of the republic. Yet in the more advanced times of the commonwealth, the senate always made a show of acknowledging the last, or executive power, to be lodged in the people; *Senatus censuit, populus jussit:* although this may fairly be supposed to be nothing more than a piece of affected moderation; since we know that they retained the full exercise of those powers we have mentioned, even after all the encroachments of the people, down to the times of the Gracchi (A.U.C. 620), when their authority suffered, indeed, a great abridgment.

Towards the end of the regal government, the territory belonging to the Roman state was extremely limited. It is said to have been only forty miles in length and thirty in breadth. The progress of the Romans in extending their frontier was at first extremely slow. Time was requi-

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site for subduing nations as warlike as themselves; and the methods both of making conquests and preserving them were little known. This was the reason why the first care of the Romans, most wisely, was to strengthen themselves in their possessions. It would have weakened them too much had they early attempted to extend their boundaries. The only use they yet made of their victories was to naturalise the inhabitants of some of the conquered states, and thus increase their population. By this wise forbearance they became a powerful state, though within a narrow territory; because their strength was always superior to their enterprises. They derived likewise, from the small extent of their lands, a spirit of moderation and frugality. It was thus they paved the way for extending their limits afterwards with advantage; and this judicious policy of choosing at first to possess rather too small than too extensive a territory, laid the solid foundation of their future greatness.

But with regard to the real forces or strength both of the Romans and of their rival states in those early times, we are, on the whole, extremely ignorant. The Roman historians appear to have exaggerated greatly in these particulars. We find in those authors, that notwithstanding very bloody engagements, the Romans, as well as their enemies —the Latins, Sabines, Æqui, and Volsci—take the field next campaign with armies still more numerous than before. Yet the cities and territories which furnished those armies were extremely inconsiderable. The country to which they belonged was not remarkable for its fertility; and in such a

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state of perpetual warfare, the inhabitants, constantly intent on ravaging and pillaging, could not possibly cultivate it to advantage. We have every reason, therefore, to believe that the numbers of those armies said to have been brought into the field are greatly exaggerated.

The frequent, and indeed incessant wars between those neighbouring nations and the Roman state during the early periods—continually renewed, in spite of repeated treaties, and many signal, and apparently decisive victories—are subjects of just surprise. M. Montesquieu has assigned a very ingenious cause for this disregard of treaties. It was a maxim among the states of Italy, that treaties or conventions made with one king or chief magistrate had no binding obligation upon his successor. This, says he, was a sort of law of nations among them. It were to be wished that ingenious writer had given some special authority for this very singular fact, instead of contenting himself with saying in general that it appears throughout the history of the kings of Rome.

In the subsequent periods of the Roman history, hostilities more generally commenced upon the part of the Romans than on that of their neighbours; of which there seems to have been this simple cause, that the chief-magistrates, the consuls, being changed every year, it was natural for every magistrate to endeavour to signalise himself as much as he could during the short period of his administration. Hence the consuls were always persuading the senate to some new military enterprise; and that body soon became glad of a pretext which, by employing the people

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in an occupation they were fond of, prevented all intestine disquiets and mutinies. That this continual engagement in war, and consequent characteristical military spirit of the Romans, was owing to nothing else than their situation, is rendered the more probable from this fact, that, excepting a small circle of the states immediately around and in their vicinity, which necessarily contracted the same military spirit, all the other nations of Italy were indolent, voluptuous, and inactive.

The regal government among the Romans subsisted for 244 years, and during all that time only seven kings are said to have reigned. This statement is extraordinary; and the more so when we consider that there was no hereditary succession, where sometimes an infant succeeds to an old man; but each king was advanced in life when he ascended the throne; that several of them died a violent death, and that the last of them lived thirteen years after his expulsion. These are circumstances which have suggested considerable doubt with regard to this period of the Roman history; and it must be acknowledged that, even during the first five centuries from the alleged period of the building of Rome, we can be very little assured that the detail of facts which is commonly received on the authority of Livy and Dionysius is perfectly authentic. It is an undisputed fact, that during the greater part of that time there were no historians. The first Roman who undertook to write the history of his country was Fabius Pictor, who lived during the second Punic war, A. U. C. 535, and B. C. 218,)



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to which period he brought down his work; but the materials from which it was compiled were, if we may credit Dionysius, in a great measure traditionary reports; nor is his chronology to be relied on. We know, indeed, with some certainty, that there were no authentic monuments of the early ages at this time existing among the Romans. Livy tells us, that almost all the ancient records of their history perished by fire when the city was taken by the Gauls. This author, therefore, with great candour, gives his readers to understand that he does not warrant the authenticity of what he relates of those ancient times, "It has been allowed," says he, "to antiquity to mix what is human or natural with the divine or supernatural and thus to magnify or exalt the origin of empires; but on such traditions I lay little stress; and what weight or authority may be given to them I shall not here stop to consider*."

From such and similar considerations, some critics have gone so far as to reject as entirely fabulous the whole history of those first five hundred years of the Roman story: but this is to push the sceptical spirit greatly too far. There is, indeed, a mist of doubt hangs over the origin of this great people, as over that of most of the ancient nations; and it is the part of sober and discriminating judgment to separate what has the probability of authenticity from what is palpably fabulous, and thus to form for itself a rational

* Datur hæc venia antiquitati, ut miscendo humana divinis, primordia urbium augustiora faciat.—Sed hæc et his similia, utcunque animadversa aut æstimata erunt, haud equidem in magno ponam discrimine.—Liv. Hist., lib. i. Proem.

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creed, even with regard to those ages where the materials of history are most deficient. It is not unreasonable to conceive that the outlines of the revolutions and fortune of nations, in remote periods of time, may be preserved for many centuries by tradition alone, though extremely natural that, in this traditionary record, the truth may undergo a liberal intermixture of fable and romance.



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## CHAPTER III.

Interregnum—Consuls appointed with sovereign Power—Conspiracy against the new Government—Patriotism of Brutus—Valerian Law—War with Porsena—Popular Disturbances—Debts of the Poor—A Dictator appointed—Impolitic conduct of the Patricians—Their Concessions—Tribunes of the People created—Change in the Constitution—Reflections on.

TARQUINIUS SUPERBUS had trampled on all the constitutional restraints, and on all the regulations of the preceding sovereigns. He had never assembled the senate, nor called together the people in the *Comitia*. He is even said to have destroyed or broken the tablets on which the laws were written, in order to efface all remembrance of them. It was necessary, therefore, after his expulsion, that new tables should be framed, and these, we may presume, were much the same with the former.

An interregnum took place for some time, and during this time the supreme power was lodged by the senate in the hands of Lucretius. Brutus having in his possession some writings of Servius Tullius, containing, as it is said, the plan of a republican government, these were read to the senate and people, and approved of. The regal government had become completely odious, and it was agreed to commit the supreme authority to

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two magistrates, to be annually elected by the people out of the order of the patricians. In these they gave the name of *Consules;* a modest title, says the Abbé de Vertot, which gave to understand that these magistrates were rather the counsellers of the republic than its sovereigns, and that the only point which they ought to have in view was its preservation and glory. But, in fact, the authority of the consuls differed scarcely anything from that of the kings. They had the chief administration of justice, the absolute disposal of the public money, the power of convoking the senate and assembling the people, of raising troops, naming all the officers, and the right of making peace, war, and alliance; in short, unless that their authority was limited to a year, thay were in every respect kings. The consuls wore the purple robe, they had the *sella curulis*, or ivory chair of state, and each of them was attended by twelve lictors armed with the *fasces*, the symbols of their power of life and death. The two first consuls were Brutus, and Collatinus, the husband of Lucretia.

These magistrates, we have said, were elected out of the body of the patricians; an exclusive privilege which, in fact rendered the constitution purely aristocratical. But the jealousy of the people was not yet alarmed; and they were so well pleased to be freed from the despotic power of a single tyrant, that it did not occur to them that they had any thing to dread from a multitude of tyrants.

On this change of the government solemn sacrifices were performed, the city was purified by an expiation or lustrum, and the people renewed their

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oath against the name and office of king. Tarquin was at this time in Etruria, where he prevailed on two of the most powerful cities, Veii and Tarquinii, to espouse his cause. These states sent ambassadors to Rome with a formal requisition, that the exiled prince might be allowed to return and give an account of his conduct; but as it must have been foreseen that such a proposal could meet with no regard, the true purpose of the embassy was to secure a party in the interest of Tarquin, who might co-operate in a meditated attempt to restore him to power; and this purpose they gained by a liberal employment of bribes and promises. The conspiracy, however, was detected; and it was found that among the chief persons concerned were the two sons of Brutus, and the nephews of Collatinus. An example was now exhibited, severely virtuous indeed, but which the necessity of circumstances required and justified. Brutus himself sat in judgment upon his two sons, and condemned them to be beheaded, himself witnessing their execution. *Exuit patrem ut consulem ageret, orbusque vivere, quam publicæ vindictæ devesse maluit**. Such is the reflection of Valerius Maximus, but that of Livy is more natural; he remarks that Brutus, resolute as he was in the performance of this severe duty, could not lay aside the character, nor suppress the feelings of a father. *Quum inter omne tempus pater, vultusque et os ejus spectaculo*

* "He sacrificed the feelings of a father to the obligations of chief magistrate, and preferred a childless old age to any failure of his duty to the state."

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*esset, eminente animo patrio, inter publicæ pœnæ ministerium* *. Collatinus had not strength to imitate that example, and his endeavour to avert the punishment of his nephews procured his own deposition and banishment.

War was now the last resource of Tarquin; and, at the head of the armies of Veii and Tarquinii, he marched against the Romans. He was met by the consuls Brutus and Publius Valerius, who on the death of Collatinus had been chosen in his room, and an engagement ensued in which Brutus lost his life. The fate of the battle was doubtful; but the Romans claimed the victory, and Valerius was honoured with a triumph, a ceremony henceforward usually conferred on a victorious general after a decisive engagement. A higher honour was paid to the memory of Brutus, for whom the whole city wore mourning for ten months.

So much was the ardour of liberty kept alive by the attempts of the exiled prince, and such the jealousy of the Romans, roused by the slightest indications of an ambitious spirit in any of the citizens, that Valerius, notwithstanding the high favour he enjoyed on account of his public services, had, from a few circumstances apparently of the most trifling nature, almost lost his whole popularity. He had neglected, for some time, to summon the *comitia* for the election of a new consul, and he had built a splendid dwelling for himself on the summit of the Palatine hill, which commanded a prospect of the whole city—strong

* "While all the time his looks betrayed the feelings of a father, the pure patriotism of his soul prevailed in the administration of public justice."

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symptoms, it was thought, of the most dangerous ambition. Whether in reality, he entertained such designs as were attributed to him, may well be doubted; but it is generally believed that a hint of his danger made him at once so zealous a patriot, and so strenuous a champion for the rights of the people, that he thence acquired the ambiguous surname of *Poplicola*. He pulled down his aspiring palace, and contented himself with a low mansion in an obscure quarter of the city. Whenever he appeared in public he ordered the consular *fasces* to be lowered before the people, and the axes to be laid aside, which henceforth were borne by the lictors only without the walls of the city. He caused a law to be passed, which made it death for any citizen to aim at the tyranny; he refused to take custody of the money levied for the expenses of war, and caused that charge to be conferred on two of the senators. But of all sacrifices to liberty, that which in fact most materially enlarged the power of the people was a new law, which permitted any citizen who had been condemned to death by a magistrate, or even to banishment, or corporeal punishment, to appeal to the people; the sentence being suspended till their decision was given. This law, which from the name of its author was termed *Valerian*, struck most severely against the aristocracy; and from this era we may date the commencement of the democratic constitution of the Roman government. (A.U.C. 244.—B.C. 510.)

For thirteen years after the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus, the Romans were involved in continual wars upon this account. Of these the

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most remarkable was the war with Porsena, king of Etruria, who had taken arms in behalf of the exiled prince. The detail of this war by the Roman writers would be extremely uninteresting, were it not embellished by some romantic stories which have much the air of fable. Such are the defence of a bridge by *Horatius Cocles*, single, against the whole Etrurian army: the attempt to assassinate Porsena by *Mutius Scævola*, and the proof he gave of his fortitude by holding his hand in the fire till it was consumed; the story of Clelia the hostage, and her companions, who swam across the Tiber amidst a shower of arrows;—beautiful incidents, but scarcely entitled to the credit of historical facts. Such examples, however, of invincible resolution are said to have produced a striking effect on the mind of Porsena, and to have converted him from an enemy into a firm friend and ally of the Romans. Tarquin, nevertheless, found still a powerful support from the external enemies, and doubtless from some of the traitorous subjects of the republic. Thirty of the states of Latium continued still in his interest, and the war was carried on with as much animosity as ever.

The Romans were in the train of success when there arose among them such violent dissensions as had very near proved the most fatal consequences. As these domestic disturbances continued long to embroil the republic, and were the source of many important revolutions, it is proper to consider their origin with some attention.

We have already seen that in the time of Romulus, when the first partition was made of the lands, a certain proportion was reserved for the

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public uses, and the rest distributed among the people by equal shares of two acres to each Roman citizen. Afterwards, when Rome was extending her territory, new partitions were made of the conquered lands, but not with the same impartiality and equality. A part was reserved for the use of the state, but the patricians generally contrived to get the rest into their hands, allowing no share to the inferior ranks of the people. These abuses became more frequent from the time of Servius's new arrangement, which gave the richer citizens an entire ascendency in the state, and they increased still more from the time of the expulsion of the kings, when the government became, as we have seen, aristocratical. This inequality of property continually increasing, and the indigence of the lower classes obliging them frequently to contract debts, they found, in a little time, that they were stripped by the severity of their creditors even of those inconsiderable pittances of land from which they derived their subsistence. It was one of the early laws of the Roman state, that a debtor who was unable to pay was delivered as a slave to his creditor; he was chained that he might not escape, and was employed in the hardest labour. The grievance was further increased by this flagrant injustice—that there was no law which limited the rate of interest on borrowed money, so that many of those miserable plebeians, incurring at first a trifling debt, saw themselves stripped of all they possessed, and reduced to a state of the most intolerable servitude.

From complaints which they found entirely disregarded, they proceeded to mutiny, and to open

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and violent expressions of their indignation against the higher orders. The war required new levies, and the senate ordered that the plebeians should enrol and arm in defence of the common liberties. These peremptorily refused the summons, declaring that they knew no liberties to defend, since a foreign yoke could not be more intolerable than the bondage they experienced at home.

The senate was assembled, and the matter solemnly deliberated. Some of the higher order generously gave their opinion for an entire remission of the debts of the poorer class of people; others opposed the proposal, as sanctioning a violation of faith, and a criminal breach of legal obligation. Appius Claudius, a violent and proud patrician, maintained that the people suffered nothing more than their deserts, and that if not kept in poverty they would be for ever factious and unruly. Amidst these contending opinions the senate was at a loss what decision to pronounce. An alarm spread of the approach of the enemy to attack the city, and this report gave fresh spirit to the populace. They persisted in their refusal to enter the rolls, and declared that if their grievances were not immediately redressed they would quit the city. The consuls found their authority of no avail, for the Valerian law had given every citizen whom they condemned a right of appealing to the people.

To evade the force of this law some extraordinary measure was necessary. The senate passed a decree ordaining the consuls to lay down their office, and enacting, that in their room a single magistrate should be elected by the senate, and

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confirmed by the people, who for six months should be invested with absolute and unlimited authority. The people were assembled in the *comitia* by centuries, an arrangement which, as we have seen, threw the whole power into the hands of the higher orders, and thus a decree was easily obtained which ratified the ordinance of the senate; the lower ranks, perhaps, flattering themselves that the new magistrate would procure a redress of their grievances. This is the first instance of the creation of a *dictator*, an expedient which we shall see was afterwards in times of necessity very frequently resorted to. The senate appointed one of the consuls, *Clelius*, to choose the dictator, (a form henceforth always observed,) and he named to that office his colleague *Lartius*. The dictator chose for himself a lieutenant, or *magister equitum;* he made the twenty-four lictors resume their axes, a sight which struck terror into the people, and disposed them to submission and obedience. All the citizens, whose names were called by the dictator, were enrolled without a murmer. Four bodies of troops were formed, of which one was left for defence of the city, and with the other three the dictator took the field against the enemy. He had some successes against the hostile states, which paved the way for a truce for a year, and, in the meantime, Lartius returned to Rome and abdicated his office. In the year following, when the war was renewed, it was found necessary to recur to the same expedient. Aulus Posthumius was chosen dictator, who gained an important victory near to the lake Regillus, in which the two sons of Tarquin, Sextus and Titus, were slain.

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This put an end to all his prospects. He retired to *Cumæ* in Campania, where he died at the advanced age of ninety; and the allied states now concluded peace with the Romans (A. U. C. 257). In this year was held the sixth *census*, or numeration of the Roman people, by which it appeared that the number of the citizens capable of bearing arms was 157,700.

Till now, the senators had seen the necessity of keeping some measures with the people, lest they should exasperate them into the execution of a design they sometimes expressed of calling back the exiled Tarquins. As this fear was now at an end, the insolence of the higher orders daily increased. Appius Claudius, who was at this time consul, now openly avowed a resolution of breaking this mutinous spirit of the plebeians, and reducing them to absolute submission. But this policy was no less absurd than it was tyrannical. The plebeians, from their vast superiority in numbers, had only to follow an united plan, to force the higher orders to compliance with any measure on which they chose to insist. A striking incident, which had a powerful effect on their passions, gave them this spirit of union, and excited the most violent ferment in the commonwealth.

In the midst of the public assembly, a venerable figure, hoary with age, pale and emaciated, his countenance furrowed with anguish, and his whole appearance expressive of misery and calamity, stood up before the tribunal of the consuls, and prayed aloud for mercy against the oppression of an inhuman creditor. Disfigured as he was, his coun-

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tenance was known, and many remembered to have seen him in the wars, where he fought with great courage, and had received many honourable wounds in the service of his country. He told his story with affecting simplicity. The enemy, in an incursion, had ravaged his little farm, and set fire to his cottage. Bereft of subsistence, he had borrowed, to support life, a small sum from one of the rich citizens; the interest had accumulated, and being quite unable to discharge the debt, he had delivered himself with two of his children into bondage. In this situation, he affirmed that his merciless creditor had treated him as the worst of malefactors; and throwing aside his garment, he showed his back all covered with blood from the recent strokes of the whip*.

This miserable sight roused the populace to the highest pitch of fury. They rushed upon the consul's tribunal; and Appius would have been torn to pieces, had not the lictors cleared for him a passage and carried him off to a place of safety. His colleague, Servilius, a man of a moderate and humane spirit, endeavoured with tears in his eyes to appease the tumult, and pledged himself to the people to mediate with the senate in their behalf. Such was the state of Rome, when an alarm was given that the Volsci had entered the territory of the republic. The senate felt its weakness; they employed Servilius to treat with the people, and he gave them his promise that their grievances should be considered, and redressed as soon as the

* See Livy, lib. ii. c. 23, where this incident is most eloquently related.

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present danger was removed. They enlisted themselves under his standard, and marching against the Volsci, engaged and defeated them with considerable slaughter.

It had hitherto been customary, after every victory, where there was an acquisition of booty, to reserve a part of it for the use of the state; but Servilius, on this occasion, had thought it a wise policy to conciliate the troops by dividing the whole of it among them. Appius, with much indiscretion, thought proper to accuse him on that score to the senate, and to procure a vote of that body refusing him the honour of a triumph. Servilius felt the indignity, and in an assembly of the people in the Campus Martius, he complained to them of the senate's injustice. The people immediately brought forth the triumphal car, and placing him on it with high acclamations, conducted him to the capitol with the usual pomp of a triumph. But this strong testimony of popularity did not ensure the continuance of their favour. As Servilius had now lost all credit with the senate by holding their authority in defiance, and hence found himself unable to make good his promise to the people of a redress of grievances, he soon became equally obnoxious to both parties.

The disorders, mean time, continued as violent as ever, and a new alarm from the enemy obliged the senate again to resort to the nomination of a dictator. Marcus Valerius, the brother of Poplicola, a man agreeable to the plebeians, was chosen to that high office; and as his private sentiments were favourable to their cause, he had no scruple

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to engage his word for a redress of their wrongs, on condition of their following his standard.

The enemy was subdued, and he now required the senate to fulfil his engagements. But Appius, the stubborn opponent of every measure that was favourable to the people, prevailed to have this demand refused. There is, I think, some question whether the dictator, in virtue of that supreme power with which he was for the time invested, could not by his own authority have enforced this measure, for which his honour was engaged. But Valerius was an old man, and probably dreaded the consequences of so violent a procedure. He assembled the people, and after doing justice to their bravery and patriotism, he complained that he was not allowed to keep his engagements with them, but declared that his authority should no longer countenance a breach of the public faith, and he immediately abdicated his office.

The people thus repeatedly and shamefully deceived, were determined to be no longer the dupes of promises. The senate, apprehensive of their spirit, had ordered the consuls not to disband them, but to lead them without the walls, on pretence that the enemy were still in the field. The soldiers, at the time of their enrolment, took an oath not to desert their standards till they were formally disbanded; but this oath they eluded by taking their standards along with them. Under Sicinius Bellutus, one of their own order, they marched with great regularity to a hill at three miles distance from the city, afterwards called, from that occurrence, the *Mons Sacer;* and here

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they were in a short time joined by the greatest part of the people*.

There can be nothing figured more arbitrary and more impolitic than the proceedings of the senate. Their pride was now humbled; they found there was a necessity for adopting the most lenient and conciliatory measures; and they deputed some of the most respectable of their order, who, after a difficult and laboured negociation, were compelled at length to grant the people all they demanded. The debts were solemnly abolished; and for the security of the people in time to come, and a warrant against all new attempts or modes of oppression, they were allowed the right of choosing magistrates from their own order, who should have the power of opposing with effect every measure which they might judge in any shape prejudicial to their interest.

These new magistrates were to be elected annually, like the consuls. They were five in number†, and were termed *tribunes*, because the first of them were chosen from among the *tribuni militum* of the different legions. They had the power of suspending by a single *veto* the execution of any decree of the senate which they judged prejudicial to the interest of the people; they were not allowed, however, to interfere in the deliberations of that body, nor permitted even to enter the senate-house. The persons of these magistrates were declared sacred; but their authority was confined within the bounds of the city and a

* Dion. Hal., lib. v.; Livy, lib. ii., c. 32.

† About thirty years after, their number was increased to *ten* and it so continued ever afterwards.



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mile beyond the walls. The tribunes demanded two magistrates to aid them in their office, and this request was likewise granted. These were called *Ædiles*, from the charge given them of the public buildings; and afterwards they had likewise the care of the games, spectacles, and other matters of police within the city.

The creation of the Tribunes of the People is the era of a change in the Roman constitution. The Valerian law had given a severe blow to the aristocracy, or part of the patricians; and the creation of popular magistrates with such high powers had now plainly converted the government into a democracy. Had the people been mildly dealt with, the desire of a revolution had never taken place, and the patricians might have enjoyed their ascendency in the state, to which time would always have given new confirmation. But the violence and unruly passions of a few leading men are capable of embroiling the most peaceful community, and awakening causes of discontent and jealousy which otherwise would have had no existence. The tyrannising spirit of Appius Claudius, and the stubbornness of that faction of the rich who supported him, drove the people at length to desperate measures, and gave rise to that formidable and resistless opposition of which we have seen the effects.

A strong degree of jealousy had, from the first institution of the commonwealth, begun to rankle in the breasts of the plebeians against the higher order. They saw, with a very natural indignation, that the patricians had supplanted them in all the offices of power and emolument; for, though there

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was a nominally free election to those offices in which the whole people had a right of suffrage, yet this, from causes already sufficiently explained, was in practice illusory. But the immediate cause of things coming to an open rupture was, as we have seen, the intolerable burden of the debts owing by the poor to the rich. This grievance became at length so general, from the frequency of the military campaigns, in which every soldier was obliged to serve at his own charges, and from the ravages committed on the lands by the hostile armies, which reduced the poorer sort entirely to beggary, that the plebeians began to look upon their order as born to a state of hereditary servitude. Hence that desperate measure of abaudoning the city and encamping in arms upon the *Mons Sacer*. All that the people at this time desired was not power, but a relief from oppression and cruelty, And had this just claim been readily listened to, and a relief granted to them, if not by an entire abolition of the debts, at least by repressing the enormous usury, and taking away the inhuman rights of slavery and of corporal punishment, this people would, in all probability, have cheerfully returned to order and submission, and the Roman constitution might long have remained, what we have seen it was at first, aristocratical. But a torrent imprudently resisted will in time acquire that impetuous force which carries every thing before it. The patricians, sensible that they had pushed matters to a most alarming extreme, and now thoroughly intimidated, were obliged to grant the demand of creating popular magistrates. The tribunate being once established, we shall see it become the main



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object with these magistrates to increase their own powers by continual demands and bold encroachments. The people regarding them as the champions of their rights, are delighted to find themselves gradually approaching to an equality with the higher order; and no longer bounding their desires to ease and security, become soon equally influenced by ambition as their superiors, while that passion in them is the less subject to controul that they have more to gain and less to lose. While this people, borne down by hardships and oppression, seek no more than the redress of real grievances and a share of ease and happiness as the members of a free state, we applaud their spirited exertions, and execrate that arbitrary and inhuman principle which prompted the higher order to treat them as slaves or inferior beings. But when we behold this people compassing at length by a vigorous and manly resistance the end they wished for—attaining ease and security, nay power, which at first they had not sought, and never dreamed of; when we see them, after this, increasing in their demands, assuming all that arrogance they justly blamed before, goaded on by the ambition of their leaders to aim at tyrannising in their turn—we view with proper discrimination the love of liberty and its extreme, licentiousness; and treat with just detestation the authors of those pernicious measures, which embroiled the state in endless factions, and paved the way for a total loss of that liberty which this deluded people knew not to put a true value upon when they actually possessed it.

Some authors, and among the rest the Abbé Condillac, pretend to find in those perpetual dissen-

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sions and violent struggles between the patrician and plebeian orders at Rome, the true cause of the glorious and prodigious extension of her empire, and of all her subsequent grandeur and prosperity. This, though not an uncommon mode of reasoning, is by far more specious than it is solid. I would ask what shadow of necessary connexion there is between the factious disorders, and internal convulsions of a state, and the extension of her empire by foreign conquest? On the contrary, it seems a self-evident proposition, that while the one spirit exists, the other for the time is extinguished, or lies altogether dormant; for the ambition of domestic rule cannot otherwise be gratified than by a constant and servile attention to the arts of popularity, incompatible with the generous passion which leads to national aggrandisement. The people too, won only by corruption, and split by rival demagogues into factions, embittered against each other with the most rancorous hostilities, are incapable of that cordial union to which every foreign enterprise must owe its success. The martial spirit may, no doubt, be kept alive, and find improving exercise in a civil war or rebellion; but this spirit finds too much exercise at home, to seek for employment in foreign conquests; and in the breasts of the leading men, those selfish motives, either of avarice or the love of power, which are commonly the sources of all civil disorders, are baneful to every generous and patriotic feeling, which seeks alone the true greatness or glory of the state.

In the present case, the true causes of the wonderful extension of the Roman empire will be

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sought in vain, in the perpetual contests between the higher and the lower orders. These, instead of being productive of national aggrandisement, were the immediate causes of the fall of the commonwealth and the ruin of civil liberty. The main source of the extension of the empire by its conquests, is to be found in the extraordinary abilities of a few great men, who, either in a subordinate station had too much worth to prefer a selfish interest to the glory of their country, or who spurning the more confined object of superior power at home, proposed to themselves a nobler and more glorious aim by extending the limits of that empire which they ruled as sovereigns.

It is not to be denied that other causes, likewise, contributed to the aggrandisement of the Roman empire. Several of these have been pointed out by Montesquieu. Such was, among others, the very power of those enemies they had to encounter; a power which must either have entirely oppressed and annihilated them, or forced them to that most vigorous and animated exertion to which they owed their successes. Such enemies were the Gauls, the Macedonians under Pyrrhus, and the Carthaginians under Hannibal. So far were the factions of the state from being the cause of those successes, and that rapid extension of empire, that it was the formidable power of such external enemies that, lulling asleep for the time every source of domestic faction and disorder, enabled the republic to employ its whole strength, and make those spirited efforts to which it owed its most glorious successes.

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## CHAPTER IV.

Increase of the Power of the Tribunes—They convoke an Assembly of the People—Coriolanus—Disputes on the Agrarian Law—Law of Volero—and change produced by it.

THE disorders which we have seen allayed by the creation of the tribunes of the people, were only quieted for a very short space of time. We shall see them immediately renewed, and continued, with very little interruption, till the people acquired an equal title with the patricians to all the offices and dignities of the commonwealth. Thus, for a period of almost two centuries, the history of Rome, during every succeeding year, presents almost the same scenes; an endless reiteration of complaints, on account of the same or similar grievances; opposed by the same spirit, resisted by similar arguments, and usually terminating in the same way, to the increase of the popular power. As our object is to give rather a just idea of the character and spirit of nations, than a scrupulous detail, or minute chronicle of events, we shall, in that period, touch only on such circumstances as, while they are illustrative of the genius of the people, are necessary to form a connected chain of the principal events which had their influence on the revolutions and fate of this Republic.

The first tribunes of the people were created

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260 years after the foundation of Rome, and seventeen years after the abolition of the regal government. These magistrates were habited like simple citizens; they had no exterior ensigns of power; they had neither tribunal nor jurisdiction as judges; they had no guards nor attendants, unless a single domestic termed *Viator* or *Apparitor*. They stood without the senate-house, nor durst they enter it unless they were called in by the consuls: but possessing, as we have said, the power of suspending or annulling, by a single veto, the most solemn decrees of that body, their influence and authority were very great.

Every thing, for a little while, wore an appearance of tranquillity. The senators blindly applauded themselves on the success of their negociation, as they saw the people pleased, and could see nothing to fear from those rude and simple magistrates, who had not even the outward symbols of power. But this delusion was of short continuance.

It was in the beginning of spring, that the people had retreated to the *Mons Sacer;* at a time when it was customary to plough and sow the fields of the republic. As the lands had lain neglected during those commotions, it was not surprising that the following harvest should be a season of great scarcity. This, perhaps, the senate, by proper precautions, might have prevented. The tribunes accused that body of negligence, and of a design to raise a famine among the people, while the patricians, as they insinuated, had taken care of themselves, by laying in abundant supplies.

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The consuls assembled the people, and attempted to justify the senate; but being constantly interrupted by the tribunes, they could not make themselves be heard. They urged, that the tribunes having only the liberty of opposing, ought to be silent till a resolution was formed. The tribunes, on the other hand, contended that they had the same privileges in an assembly of the people, that the consuls had in a meeting of the senate. The dispute was running high, when one of the consuls rashly said, that if the tribunes had convoked the assembly, they, instead of interrupting them, would not even have taken the trouble of coming there; but that the consuls having called this assembly, they ought not to be interrupted. This imprudent speech was an acknowledgment of a power in the tribunes to convoke the public assemblies; a power which they themselves had never dreamt of. It may be believed they were not remiss in laying hold of the concession. They took the whole people to witness what had been said by the consuls, and an assembly of the people was summoned, by the tribunes, to meet the next day*.

The whole people assembled by daybreak. Icilius, one of the tribunes, urged that, in order that they might be in a capacity of effectually fulfilling their duty, in protecting and vindicating the rights of the people, they should have the power, not only of calling them together, but of haranguing them without being subject to any interruption. The people were unanimously of this opinion; and a

* Dion. Hal. l. c. Liv. lib. ii. Plutarch in Coriol.

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law to that purpose was instantly passed by general acclamation. The consuls would have rejected this law, on the score of the assembly's being held against all the established forms :—it had not been legally summoned, and there had been no consultation of the auspices; but the tribunes declared that they would pay no more regard to the decrees of the senate, than the consuls and the senate should pay to those of the people. The senate was forced to yield, and the new law was ratified by the consent of both orders. Thus there were now established in the republic two separate legislative powers, which maintained a constant opposition to each other.

There was but one method by which the senate might, perhaps, have recovered their power. This was, by exercising their authority with such moderation, and so much regard to the interests of the people, as to render the functions of the tribunes superfluous. But this was a difficult part to act. Being once supreme, they could not stoop to an abasement of power, and inflexibly struggling to maintain a prerogative which they wanted real strength to vindicate, they prepared for themselves only a greater humiliation.

One of the most violent of the senators was Caius Marcius, surnamed Coriolanus from a successful campaign he had made against the Volsci, in which he had taken Corioli, one of their principal towns. Coriolanus had aspired to the consulate, but the people fearing his high and arrogant spirit, had excluded him from that dignity. Incensed at this disappointment, he took every opportunity of expressing his resentment; and in

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particular, declared openly in the senate, that the necessities of the people, occasioned by the present famine, furnished an opportunity which ought not to be neglected, of compelling them to relinquish all pretensions to authority, and to abolish their new magistrates.

The people, exasperated beyond measure, vowed vengeance against Coriolanus, and they summoned him to appear before them, and answer for his conduct. He refused, and the Ædiles had orders to arrest him, but were repulsed in the attempt by his partisans among the patricians. In a tumultuous assembly of the people, one of the tribunes proceeded, with a daring stretch of authority, to pronounce Coriolanus guilty of treason, and award a capital punishment: but the people themselves were sensible that this was going too far; they repealed this precipitate sentence; allowed him twenty-seven days to prepare his defence, and summoned him to appear before their assembly after the lapse of that term.

During this interval the consuls and the chief senators, who saw the dangerous consequences of violent measures, endeavoured, by persuasion, to operate a good understanding between the orders. They laboured to convince the tribunes that it had hitherto been the constant practice, and agreeable to the constitution of the republic, that every public measure should originate by a motion in the senate, and that till this body had given a decree no business of state could be agitated in the assembly of the people. The tribunes did not acquiesce in these propositions: they contended that the authority of the people was

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co-ordinate with that of the senate; and that—the Valerian law having ordained a right of appeal to the people from the senate, and all magistrates—they must, of course, possess the right of citing before them any citizens who had offended. The affair was of difficult decision, in the uncomplying temper in which parties then stood. It was, however, thus compromised for the present. The tribunes agreed to make their complaint against Coriolanus in the senate, and that body consented on their part, to refer the consideration of the cause back to the assembly of the people. This course, accordingly, was adopted. The senate admitted the importance (if proved) of the charges preferred to their body by the tribunes, and ordained Coriolanus to appear and answer in the assembly of the people. They were desirous, however of procuring this assembly to be convoked *by centuries;* by which means they flattered themselves with an entire ascendant, which would ensure the acquittal of their member: but the people would not consent to it; the votes were called in the order of *the tribes;* and Coriolanus was condemned to perpetual exile.

He now proposed to himself a plan of vengeance, in the last degree ignominious, and which no injuries an individual can receive are sufficient to justify. He repaired to the camp of the Volscians, and offered his services to the determined enemies of his country. They were accepted; and such was the consequence of his abilities as a general, that Rome in the space of a few months was reduced to extremity. The people now demanded that the senate should repeal their decree

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of banishment; but that body, with a laudable firmness, declared that they would grant no terms to a rebel while in arms against his sovereign state. The importunity of the populace, however, so far prevailed, that a deputation consisting of five persons of consular dignity, and his own relations, was sent to propose terms of accommodation. Coriolanus haughtily answered that he would never consent to treat of peace, till the Romans should restore whatever they possessed of the Volscian territory, and he allowed the space of thirty days to consider of this proposition. At the end of that time he appeared again with his army under the walls of the city. The senate maintained an inflexible resistance to the demands of the traitor, and to the popular clamour. At length a band of Roman matrons, at the head of which was Veturia, the mother of Coriolanus, with his wife and children, repaired to the camp of the enemy, and suddenly presented themselves at the feet of Coriolanus. The severity of his nature was not proof against this last appeal. He consented to lay down his arms; he ordered his troops to retire; and thus Rome owed her safety to the tears of a woman.

There are few historical *events* (so called) which give more room for scepticism than this story of Coriolanus. If we should admit that the resentment of his wrongs might have hurried a high-spirited Roman into a conduct so utterly disgraceful—and moreover so dangerous, while his mother, his wife, and all his kindred were hostages in the hands of his countrymen,—how can we believe that Rome, ever superior as we

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have seen her to the petty states which were her enemies, should, during the whole time of this lengthened negociation, have taken no effective measures of resistance or defence; that we should neither find a Roman general nor a Roman army in the field to check the triumphant pride of this traitor to his country; that the Volscians—who, three years before, were so weakened by a pestilence, that Velitræ, one of their most flourishing towns, would have been entirely annihilated, but for the supply of a colony of Roman citizens—should have now become so powerful as to strike terror and dismay into the Roman state, and compel her to that mean act of supplication, to which, we are told, she owed her escape from destruction? If there is any truth in a story so void of probability, there is only one circumstance truly deserving of attention—the striking contrast between the conduct of the senate and that of the people. The people—fluctuating in their opinions, and ever in extremes—the one day, in the height of exasperation against Coriolanus for an offence against themselves, condemn him to perpetual exile; and the next, ignominiously entreat his forgiveness and deprecate his resentment. The senate—who, before his condemnation, alarmed at what they thought a stretch of power in the people, would have done every thing to save him, yet, sentence being once passed, conscious that the honour of the republic was her most valuable possession, which no danger ought to compel its guardians to betray—could by no entreaties be swayed to make concessions to a rebel in arms against his country. While such were the sentiments of her chief magistrates, Rome, weak and

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defenceless as we are told she was, continues still to command respect and admiration.

Historians are not agreed as to the fate of Coriolanus—a circumstance which renders the whole of his history more suspicious. According to some authors, he was assassinated by the Volscians, in revenge for his defection; according to others, he languished out his days among them in melancholy obscurity. It has never been asserted seriously that he returned to Rome.

The dissensions between the orders with which the Roman republic was destined to be for ever embroiled, were now rekindled from a new cause of controversy. This was an agrarian law, a measure proposed at first by Cassius, one of the consuls, from motives of selfish ambition. He aimed at nothing less than supreme power; and he proposed this measure of an equal partition of all the lands which had been at any time won from the enemy, as the most probable means of acquiring the favour of the people. But he was too precipitate; his views were suspected, and the tribunes gave the alarm. They could not bear that popular measures should be proposed by any but themselves; they adopted the scheme of Cassius; but persuaded the people that what was an interested measure upon his part, they were determined to prosecute for the public good.

The senate, jealous of the tribunes, and sufficiently aware of the views of Cassius, were resolved themselves to pre-occupy the ground. They passed a decree that an inquiry should be made as to those conquered lands which had at any time been adjudged to belong to the public; that a part

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should be reserved for the common pasturage of cattle, and that the rest should be distributed to such of the plebeians as had either no lands, or but a small proportion. Yet this was all a piece of artifice on the part of the higher orders. They had no mind that this decree should ever be carried into effect. They subjoined to it a clause that the *consules designati*, or those who were next year to enter upon that office, should name *decemviri* for making the necessary investigation and following forth the decree.

This measure of an *agrarian law* we shall observe, from this time forward, to be a source of domestic dissensions, down to the very end of the Commonwealth. Cassius was the first proposer of it, and it cost him his life. His office of consul was no sooner at an end, than he was solemnly accused of aspiring at royalty; and, by sentence of the popular assembly, he was thrown from the Tarpeian Rock; the usual punishment of treason. Soon afterwards, Menius, one of the tribunes, brought on the consideration of the law. He called on the consuls to nominate the *decemviri;* and on their refusal, he opposed the levies which the consuls had ordered to be made on account of a war with the Æqui and Volsci. The consuls adopted a very violent procedure: they quitted the city, and established their tribunal without the jurisdiction of the tribunes. Thither they summoned the people to attend them, and to give up their names to be enrolled. They refused to obey; on which the consuls ordered their lands to be ravaged, and their flocks carried off. This had its desired effect; but so violent a measure was

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never again attempted. A more sure and less dangerous expedient was afterwards followed, which was, to divide the tribunes. One tribune could, by his *veto*, oppose or suspend any decree; but if another opposed him, the *veto* was of no effect. Icilius, one of the tribunes, having opposed the forming of the levies, his four colleagues, gained over by the senate, took the opposite side; and it was therefore agreed that the consideration of the agrarian law should be postponed till the termination of the war.

When that period arrived, the contest was again renewed. The tribunes brought on the consideration of the law; they demanded why the last consuls had not named *decemviri;* and they even pretended to call them to account and to punish them for this omission. Genucius, a tribune, summoned the consuls of the current year to execute the decree which had been so long neglected. They refused, on pretence that a decree of the senate, when not executed by those consuls to whom it was directed, was held to be abrogated. Genucius then summoned the consuls of the preceding year to answer for their conduct, and vowed, as is said, that he would prosecute them to his latest breath. They took care that he should keep his word, for the next day he was found dead in his bed. The people were made to regard this as a judgment of the gods, who thus expressed their disapprobation of the schemes of this factious tribune; and his colleagues were intimidated for some time from prosecuting his views; not less, perhaps, from the apprehension of human than of divine vengeance.



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The consuls and senate, trusting to the effect of this example, assumed a more rigid authority, and the levies were made with severe exactness. Among those whom the consuls had enrolled as a common soldier, was a plebeian named *Volero*, who, in a former campaign, had been a centurion, and was esteemed a good officer. He complained of the injustice done him in thus degrading him, and refused to obey. The consuls ordered him to be scourged, from which sentence he appealed to the people. One of the consular lictors endeavouring to arrest him was beaten off; and the people, tumultuously taking his part, broke the *fasces* and drove the consuls out of the forum. The senate was immediately assembled, and the consuls demanded that Volero should be thrown from the Tarpeian Rock. The plebeians, on the other hand, called for justice against the consuls for a breach of the Valerian law, in disregarding Volero's appeal to the people; and the contest lasted till the election of the annual magistrates, when Volero was chosen one of the tribunes. The person of a tribune was sacred, and that of a consul, when out of office, was not so; but Volero did not choose to limit his vengeance to the two consuls: the whole senate was the object of his resentment, and he resolved to strike a blow which they should never recover.

The election of the tribunes of the people had hitherto been held in the *comitia curiata*. Volero urged that as these comitia could not be summoned but by a decree of the senate, that body might, on various pretences, postpone or refuse to summon them; that the previous ceremony of

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consulting the auspices was necessary, and these, the priests, who were the augurs, could interpret in any manner they chose; and that, lastly, it was always held necessary that whatever was done in those assemblies should be confirmed by a decree of the senate. He represented all these formalities as being nothing else than restrictions imposed by the senate on the popular deliberations—and proposed that henceforth the magistrates of the people should be chosen in the comitia called by tribes, which were exempt from all those restraints.

The senate, by throwing difficulties in the way, found means to retard for some time the passing of a law so fatal to their power; but their opposition was in the main ineffectual; for it passed at last, and with this remarkable addition, that all questions, in which the affairs of *the people* were agitated, should henceforward be debated in the *comitia tributa*.

This famous law of Volero completed the change in the constitution of the Roman Republic. The supreme authority from this time may be considered as having passed from the higher orders into the hands of the people. The consuls continued to preside in the comitia held by centuries; but the tribunes presided in those assemblies in which the most important business of the commonwealth was now transacted. The senate retained, however, a considerable degree of power. They had the disposal of the public money; they sent and received ambassadors,—made treaties—and their decrees had the force of a law while not annulled by a decree of the people. In a word, this body continued to have respect, and at least the appear-



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ance of authority, which we shall observe to have yet its effect in frequently restraining the violence of the popular measures. The consuls too, though in most points of effective power and authority subordinate to the tribunes, had yet in some particulars a vestige of supremacy. They were absolute at the head of the army, and first in command in the civil authority within the city. Their office still carried with it that external show of dignity which commands respect and submission, and which, over the minds of the vulgar, is frequently attended with the same influence as substantial power.

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## CHAPTER V.

An Agrarian Law never seriously projected—Decemviri proposed to digest a Code of Laws—Cincinnatus—Appointment of Decemvirs—Laws of the Twelve Tables—Tyranny of the Decemvirs—Infamous Conduct of Appius Claudius—Death of Virginia—Abolition of the Decemvirate.

THE People having now attained so very considerable an increase of authority, might certainly have prevailed in obtaining the favourite measure of an agrarian law. But the truth is, this measure was nothing more than a political engine, occasionally employed by the popular magistrates for exciting commotions, and weakening the power of the patricians. It was a measure attended necessarily with so much difficulty in the execution, that few even of the people themselves had a sincere desire of seeing it accomplished. The extensive disorder it must have introduced in the territorial possessions of the citizens, by a new distribution of all the lands acquired by conquest to the republic since the time of Romulus; the affection which even the poorest feel for a small patrimonial inheritance, the place of their nativity, and the repository of the bones of their forefathers; and that most admirable and most salutary persuasion that it is an act of impiety to alter or remove ancient

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landmarks*; all these were such strong obstacles to the accomplishment of that design, that it could never be seriously expected that the measure would meet with that effectual support which was necessary to carry it into execution.

The tribunes, well aware of those difficulties, and fearing that from too frequent repetition the proposal would become at length so stale as to produce no useful effect, bethought themselves of a new topic to keep alive the spirits of the people, and to foment those dissensions which increased their own power and diminished that of the patricians.

The Romans had at this time no body of civil laws. Those few which they had were only known to the senate and patricians, who interpreted them according to their pleasure, and as best suited their purposes. Under the regal government the kings alone administered justice: the consuls succeeded to this part of the royal prerogative, so that they had in fact the disposal of the fortunes of all the citizens. Terentius or Terentillus, one of the tribunes, in an assembly of the people, after a violent declamation on public grievances of all kinds, and particularly on that dreadful circumstance of the lot of the plebeians,

* The ingenious fable related by Ovid, Fast. lib. ii. v. 667, is a proof of this prevalent belief. The purport is, that when the capitol was founded in honour of Jupiter, all the other gods consenting to retire and abandon their right in the place, the god *Terminus* alone refused and kept his post. The moral drawn is, that what Jupiter himself could not remove, should yield to no human will or power.

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that in all contests with patricians they were sure to suffer, as the latter were both judges and parties, proposed that, in order to remedy this great evil, ten commissioners, or *decemviri*, should be appointed to frame and digest a new body of laws, for defining and securing the rights of all the different orders,—a system of jurisprudence binding alike on consuls, senators, patricians, and plebeians.

This proposition, having essential justice and good policy for its foundation, was received by the people with loud applause. It had been prudent in the higher orders to have given it no opposition, as in reality no solid objection could be made to it. But there was always a party in the senate who made it a settled principle to oppose every thing which was either beneficial or grateful to the people; as in most factions, the conduct of the different partisans is influenced less by considerations either of political expediency or moral rectitude, than by an uniform purpose of abasing and mortifying their antagonists.

The proposal, therefore met with opposition; and the consequence was, that the people, regardless of the previous formality of a decree of the senate, passed the law of Terentius in an assembly of the tribes. The senators protested against this as a most presumptuous and unconstitutional innovation. The law of Volero, it is true, which allowed all questions regarding the popular interest to be deliberated on in the *comitia tributa*, seemed in effect to confer on the assembly of the people so held the right of legislation; but the exercise of such a right, immediately and originally in the

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people, had been hitherto without example. The patricians, too, might have urged with justice, that if they were not allowed to have the right of making laws to bind the plebeians without their consent, neither could the plebeians possess a similar right to bind the patricians. Influenced by such considerations, some young men of the patrician order, headed by Cæso Quintius, the son of L. Quintius Cincinnatus, burst in arms into the midst of the comitia, and beating down all before them, dispersed the assembly. For this offence Cæso was banished by a decree of the people.

These intestine disorders, which persuaded the enemies of Rome of her general weakness, induced the Sabines to form a design of surprising and taking possession of the city. A body of 4000 men entered Rome during the night, seized upon the capitol, and invited all such citizens as were oppressed by the tyranny of their superiors to join them and vindicate their freedom. A great proportion of the people actually deliberated on this proposal: so true it is that the factions of a state never fail to extinguish the patriotic spirit; thus developing the true spring of most popular convulsions, a selfish thirst of plunder to be gratified in the overthrow of all legal authority. The senate ordered the people to arms; and the tribunes countermanded that order, declaring that, unless the consuls should immediately agree to the nomination of commissioners for the laws, they were determined to submit without resistance to the dominion of the Sabines. Publius Valerius, one of the consuls, pledged himself to the people for the performance of this condition; and the people,

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now taking arms, attacked and cut to pieces the Sabine army. But Valerius unfortunately fell in the engagement, and his colleague having come under no obligation, refused to comply with the popular desire. A successor was chosen to Valerius in the consulate, L. Quintius Cincinnatus, a man of great resolution and intrepidity, who, though himself so indigent as to cultivate with his own hands his paternal fields, and to be called from the plough to put on the robe of the consul, had yet the high spirit of an ancient patrician, which was ill disposed to brook the insolence of the popular magistrates, or acquiesce in the daily increasing pretensions of the inferior order.

Cincinnatus took a new method to bring the people to submission. He declared to the soldiers—who were yet bound by their *sacramentum*, or oath of enrolment—that he intended to carry on the war against the Æqui and Volsci, and that, for that purpose, they should winter under their tents; that he was determined not to return to Rome till the expiry of his consulate, at which time he would nominate a dictator, to secure the continuance of good order and tranquillity.

The people, who, in all their military expeditions, had never been above a few weeks at a time under arms, were thunderstruck when they heard of a winter campaign. The relinquishment of their families, and the neglect of their lands, which must necessarily be followed by a famine, were considerations most seriously alarming. They now inveighed bitterly against their tribunes who had brought matters to this extremity, and even made a proposal to the senate, agreeing to drop the Teren-

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tian law altogether, provided that body should prevail on the consul to depart from his purpose. On that condition, Cincinnatus consented to postpone the war, and the consequence was that during his consulate every thing was tranquil, and the equity of his administration made the want of laws be for a time entirely forgotten.

Two years afterwards, the republic owed her preservation to the same Cincinnatus. The Æqui had surrounded a consular army, and reduced it to extremity. Cincinnatus was chosen dictator: he defeated the enemy, and compelling them to lay down their arms, made their whole army pass naked under the yoke. In reward of this signal service he was honoured with a triumph; his son Cæso was recalled from banishment, and he abdicated his dictatorship within seventeen days.

But this opposition to the strong will of the people produced only a temporary obstruction to the force of a stream whose current was irresistible. It was the care of the tribunes perpetually to present to the minds of the populace some new object to be attained; and they now proposed that such part of the *Aventine Mount* as remained unoccupied by individual proprietors should be distributed among the poorer citizens. The consuls having delayed to propose this matter in the senate. Icilius, one of the tribunes, sent his apparitor to summon the consuls to convoke that assembly for the purpose in view. The consuls might have contemned this presumptuous summons, and so made the tribune sink under the consequence of an abortive stretch of authority, which had no support in established right or usage; but they

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were imprudent enough to cause one of their lictors to strike the apparitor with his fasces. This was a violation of the sacred character and office of the tribunes. The lictor was arrested—the senate met to allay the disturbance. It was a small matter that the people obtained their request of the Aventine Mount; but the serious and deep-felt consequence of this affair was, that from that moment the tribunes—they who were wont to sit at the door of the senate-house till called in by the consuls—now claimed and acquired a right of convoking that assembly at their pleasure.

The tribunes had this advantage over all the other magistrates, that they could be continued in office as long as the people chose. Icilius had now been tribune for six successive years; when, emboldened by repeated experiments of his power, he attempted to subject the consuls to the tribunal of the people. A tumult having arisen on account of the levies, Icilius ordered the consuls to be carried to prison, for having seized some of the plebeians, whom he wished to protect from enrolment. The patricians flew among the crowd, and drove back the tribunes and their attendants. Icilius hereupon accused the consuls of having committed sacrilege against the tribunes, and insisted that the senate should oblige them to appear before the people in the *Comitia*, and submit to whatever penalty the latter should deem proper to inflict. This bold enterprise might have succeeded, had it been possible to keep alive the same ardour with which the people seemed at first to be animated; but reflection having time to operate, the people still felt a degree of reverence for

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the first magistrates of the state, which made them look upon this as a species of rebellion. Icilius very soon perceived this change in their disposition, and was prudent enough to make a merit of sacrificing his resentment to the public tranquillity. To support his power, which might have suffered from the defeat of this bold attempt, he resumed the subject of the Terentian law, and insisted for an immediate nomination of decemvirs. After some fruitless essays of opposition by the patricians, which, as usual, ended to their disadvantage, the senate was at length forced to acquiesce in the measure. Deputies are said to have been sent into Greece to obtain accurate information as to the constitutions of the several republics, and particularly to form a collection of the laws of Solon. These, it is said, returned after a year's absence; and it was then agreed to create *decemviri*, to frame and digest such ordinances as they should judge most proper for the Roman commonwealth*. It was thought necessary that these magistrates should, for one year, be invested with sovereign power; during which time, all other magistracies, even the tribunate, which used to subsist during the dictatorship, should cease; and that they alone should have the power of making peace and war. They were to be restrained only

* The testimonies for this embassy into Greece are Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus; but the silence of all the Greek writers with regard to this remarkable deputation creates a suspicion of the fact being void of foundation: nor is there any such resemblance between the laws of Solon and those of the XII Tables as to countenance this popular story.

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in one article—that they should not abolish the *sacred laws;* that is, those which had been made in favour of the plebeians.

Menenius, the consul, in order to create some obstacle to the conclusion of this important measure, proposed that the decemvirs should be named by the consuls of the succeeding year, and this being agreed to, the patricians took care that the consuls should be such as were believed to have no favourable disposition towards the popular cause. Appius Claudius and Titus Genucius were elected consuls. But Appius disappointed the expectations of his party; for, instead of opposing the creation of decemvirs, he solicited that office. He offered, for himself and his colleague, to renounce the consulship, and proposed, in order to remove all grievances, that the same laws should be enacted for patricians and plebeians. The people now applauded Appius to the skies. The comitia were called by centuries, a circumstance which confined the office to the order of the patricians. Appius Claudius and his colleague were first nominated, and the remaining eight were, like them, senators and consular persons. The people expected a great deal from the professions of Appius; and the senate was pleased in thinking that his ambition would find a strong restraint from the opposition of his colleagues.

Thus, the earnest desire of the people was, at length, gratified by the creation of the *decemviri.* But ever impatient of their present situation, and prone to imagine advantages in every change, the populace seldom looks forward to the natural con-

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sequences of the innovations which they long for. We shall see how soon they began to reap the bitter fruits of obtaining their desire. It is somewhat difficult to account for the active part taken by the tribunes, in the creation of this new magistracy; a dignity and power which was to supersede and extinguish their own. It is not improbable, that the part which they took in this matter proceeded from no other motive than the general policy of fomenting animosities between the orders, which they found most frequently gave occasion to an extension of their own power and influence; that they never seriously expected to obtain their demand; and were, indeed, mortified at their own success. But what is most surprising is the cordial concurrence latterly shown, by both the orders, in vesting those new magistrates with such plenitude of power, as furnished them with the means they actually made use of, to annihilate all authority but their own, and render their office perpetual.

The *decemvirs*, in the first year of their magistracy, laboured, with much assiduity, in the compilation of the laws. And when their work was completed, they divided these, at first into *ten*, and afterwards into *twelve* tables. Of these Laws of the Twelve Tables, of which the name is illustrious, it is necessary to give some account, and of the sources from which it is probable they were compiled.

During the time of the regal government at Rome, we know very little of what was the state of the laws. In all probability, these were nothing else than a few regulations, called forth by

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the exigence of circumstances, and suggested by the particular cases which came before the judicial tribunals. A large mass of rules might thus be accumulated; but these, being framed on no general principles, would often, in their application to new cases, be found to err against material justice. No application of reason or philosophy had ever been made to the discovery of legal principles; for every rule was only the decision of an individual judge, according to what appeared just and equitable in the case before him. It has been a question agitated between the partisans of the popular cause and the advocates for the extension of the powers of monarchy, whether the kings of Rome were absolute, both in their legislative and ministerial capacity; or whether, in order to ratify such laws as they had the right of suggesting and proposing, it was necessary to obtain the consent and sanction of the people. In a question, to which, from the uncertainty of all that regards the early history of the Romans, it is not possible to give a positive answer, and where the opinions of historians are nothing more than their own conjectures, we may be allowed, like them, to reason according to what appears most probable. Since, therefore, it is a certain fact, that the regal dignity itself was elective, and that the choice lay in the people, it seems a natural presumption, that the people, acquiring and retaining so important a right, would not have abandoned every other article of their power or consequence. At the same time, it must be owned, that the right of electing the kings does not appear to have been a conventional prerogative of

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the people; but to have been, probably, the consequence of the first king's dying a violent death, without leaving children,—a circumstance which must necessarily have occasioned an election to the vacant office. But be this as it may, it is certainly probable, that the people who elected the official lawgiver would likewise assume or reserve to themselves some restraining or controlling influence in the laws to be enacted. The kings, we therefore suppose, submitted to the consideration of the people, in the comitia, those laws which they were desirous of enacting, and took their sense by the majority of suffrages.

These laws, after the expulsion of the Tarquins, were collected into one body by Papirius or Papisius, a patrician; and from him took the name of *Jus Civile Papirianum* or *Papisianum*. But in the beginning of the commonwealth, such was considered to be the imperfection of this code and its want of authority, that it fell entirely into neglect, and all judicial proceedings were regulated either by custom or the opinions of individual magistrates. In this situation the want of a regular system of jurisprudence, which should be a standard of procedure to all the judges, and a known and fixed rule of conduct for the people, began to be universally felt. Commissioners, as we have seen, were at length appointed to frame and digest such a code.

The Decemviri engrossed in their collection several of the ancient laws of the kings. They retained likewise all the more recent laws which had been passed in favour of the people, as that was a condition stipulated at the time of their

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appointment to office: and on the report of the deputies said to have been sent into Greece for collecting the laws of the different republics, they borrowed from them such as they judged most suitable to the Roman constitution. These laws, after being exposed for a certain time in the forum, and submitted to the judgment of the people, who it does not appear made any alteration in them, were engraven on ten tables of brass, to which two others were added a short time afterwards. These Twelve Tables became the basis of the Roman jurisprudence. Livy remarks, that in his time, amidst the infinite number of additional laws, these continued to possess the greatest authority. And Cicero, speaking of the Twelve Tables, gives them the highest encomium, affirming that they throw great light on the manners and customs of ancient times, and contain more wisdom than the libraries of all the philosophers*. It was, he tells us, a common practice for the youth to commit these laws to memory.

* Plurima, inquit Crassus, est in XII Tabulis antiquitatis effigies; quod et verborum prisca vetustas cognoscitur, et actionum genera quædam majorum consuetudinem vitamque declarant: Sive quis civilem scientiam contempletur, quam Scævola non putat oratoris esse propriam, sed cujusdam ex alio genere prudentiæ, totam hanc descriptis omnibus civitatis utilitatibus, ac partibus, XII Tabulis contineri videbitis: sive quem ista præpotens et gloriosa philosophia delectat (dicam audacius), hosce habet fontes omnium disputationum suarum, qui jure civili et legibus continentur.—Fremant licet omnes, dicam quod sentio: Bibliothecas, mehercule, omnium philosophorum unus mihi videtur XII Tabularum libellus, si quis legum fontes, et capita viderit, et auctoritatis pondere, et utilitatis ubertate superare.—*Cicero de Oratore*, lib. i.



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The laws of the Twelve Tables were classed in the following order. The *first* table enacted the form of judicial proceedings before the several tribunals. In the *second* were classed the laws regarding theft, breach of trust, and robbery. The *third* treated of debtors and creditors; the *fourth* of the *patria potestas*, or powers which a father had over his children; the *fifth* of inheritances and guardianships; the *sixth* contained the laws regarding property and possession; the *seventh* related to the punishment of different crimes and delicts; the *eighth* contained regulations regarding land estates, public roads, boundaries, and plantations; the *ninth* related to the privileges of the people, or the rights of Roman citizens; the *tenth* contained the regulation of funerals; the *eleventh* treated of religion and the worship of the gods; and the *twelfth* enacted regulations regarding marriage and the rights of husbands and wives*.

This digest of jurisprudence gave, on the whole, great satisfaction to all ranks of men; but among the statutes of the last table was one law most impolitic in the present situation of affairs, and which produced accordingly all that rancour and animosity between the orders which might have been expected. This was a law prohibiting all intermarriage between the patricians and plebeians—a law which the inferior order could not help regarding as a mark of infamy and scorn. It was naturally felt as such, and the popular magistrates

* A brief analysis of the laws of the Twelve Tables, and a very perspicuous commentary on their import, are to be found in Rosini, Antiq. Rom., Dempsteri, lib. viii.

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were not remiss in cherishing and exaggerating that impression on the minds of the people. It gave rise to a keen and animated debate in the Comitia, which Livy has minutely detailed in the fourth book of his history. The speech of the tribune Canuleius on that occasion, though doubtless owing its principal merit to the talents of the historian, is a noble specimen of eloquence, and of that judicious intermixture of argument and irony which is peculiarly suited to a popular assembly. The law itself, though carried at the time, and engrossed among those of the Twelve Tables, was not of long duration. It was, in fact, the very first which the people, in their daily advancing progress to an equality of rights with the higher order, prevailed to have abrogated.

Thus we observe the Roman jurisprudence confined at first within very narrow bounds; a circumstance which necessarily gave great latitude to judges in the power of interpreting the statutes; and the inapplicability of these to the endless variety of cases must, of course, have greatly fomented the spirit of litigation. One admirable law, however, to be found in those tables, was the best antidote that could be devised for this enormous evil. This was an enactment, that all causes should be heard and determined in one day, between sunrise and sunset. This was a powerful restraint on every species of judicial chicanery, and operated as the best remedy against that delay, the worst of grievances, which often makes injustice itself more tolerable than the means of obtaining its redress.

From the laws of the XII Tables, the *Juris-*



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*consulti* composed a system of forms and rules, by which the processes in the courts were conducted. The number of the laws was likewise increased from time to time by the *Plebiscita* and *Senatûs consulta*; the former made by the people, without the authority of the senate, in the *Comitia tributa*; the latter enacted by the sole authority of the senate. To these we may add the laws framed by the authority of the *prætors*, after the institution of that magistracy, which was near a century posterior to the creation of the decemvirs. But of those different materials which composed the body of the Roman law, it is not necessary here to treat with greater amplitude.

The *decemviri*, like most men new in office, conducted themselves at first with much wisdom and moderation: each of them by turns presided as chief magistrate of the state, during a single day, having the fasces carried before him in token of sovereign power. The nine others had no other distinguishing symbol than a single officer who preceded them, called *Accensus*. The presiding magistrate assembled the senate, took their advice, and carried into execution the result of their joint determination in the ordinary business of the Commonwealth, but the whole decemviri applied with equal diligence to the administration of justice. They met every morning in the forum, to give audience to all complaints and processes. They seemed to be animated solely by the desire of maintaining public order; nor was there any symptoms of jealousy or party-spirit. Even Appius Claudius, whom his colleagues seem to have regarded as the first in rank, affected no superiority.

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His conduct acquired him high popularity; and while he rendered impartial justice to those of every rank and station, he behaved with gentleness and courtesy to the meanest citizen. We shall presently see the purpose of this ambitious man.

The term of administration of the new magistrates had almost expired, when it was found necessary to make a supplement to the laws, of two additional tables. For that ostensible purpose, but more probably from the desire of staving off the election of tribunes, the senate decreed that there thould be a new appointment of decemviri. The people, who were equally pleased to be relieved from the consular government, as the patricians from the tribunate, approved of the measure. Several senators aspired to the new office; while the artful Appius, with a show of modesty, affected to decline it. He was, therefore, chosen to preside at the election of the new decemviri, and thus entitled to give the first suffrage. To the surprise of all, he named himself, and suggested six others of the patrician order, and three of the plebeian. Such was the popularity he had acquired, and such the satisfaction of the people, in being admitted to a share in this important and honourable office, that his nomination was received with loud applauses, and immediately agreed to; however displeasing we may presume it was to those of the higher order, who either envied the power, or penetrated into the ambitious designs, of this artful man.

The colleagues whom Appius had named for himself were all men devoted to his interest, and

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therefore, they followed an uniform system of measures. Resolved to retain their office for life, they determined no more to assemble either the Senate or the *Comitia*, but, in virtue of the plenary powers annexed to their office, to cut off all appeal; to support jointly the separate measures and decrees of each; and thus to perpetuate in their own persons a sovereign, absolute, and uncontrolled authority. This bold purpose, or at least the measures adopted for its accomplishment, it seems extremely difficult to reconcile to common prudence. All approaches to tyranny, if planned by wisdom, are gradual; and it is nothing less than madness in a magistrate to proclaim a purpose of tyrannising upon his first entering upon office.

But, whatever we may judge of the designs of these decemvirs, it is certain that they endeavoured to maintain their authority by extreme violence, and as certain that they became almost immediately the objects of public indignation. From their first appearance in the forum, they were preceded by twelve lictors, who constantly carried the fasces armed with axes. Their suit was commonly composed of a number of the most licentious patricians; profligates loaded with debt or stained with crimes; men whose pleasure lay in every species of disorder, and who contributed a desperate aid to those ministers whose power protected them in their lawless excesses.

Such was the miserable situation of Rome under her new governors, that many of the principal citizens betook themselves for refuge to the allied states. It was no wonder that the Æqui and Volsci, those perpetual enemies of the Romans,

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should judge this a favourable season for an attack upon the territory of the republic. In this emergency, the decemviri became sensible of their want of that substantial power which is founded on popularity; they were obliged to convoke the senate, and thus acknowledge the necessity of a decree of that body before a single citizen would enter the rolls. By the senate's decree, three bodies of troops were raised; two marched against the enemy, and with them eight of the decemvirs. Appius and one of his colleagues retained the other body in Rome, for the defence of the city and the support of their own authority, which an outrage of the most flagrant nature was now very speedily to bring to its termination.

Appius, sitting in judgment in his tribunal, had cast his eyes upon a young woman of uncommon beauty, who daily passed through the forum, in her way to the public schools. Virginia, a maiden of fifteen years of age, was the daughter of a plebeian, a centurion, at that time absent with the army. Appius had been informed of her situation: she was betrothed to Icilius, formerly one of the tribunes, then serving against the enemy; and their marriage was to be celebrated as soon as the campaign was at an end; an obstacle which served only to increase the passion of this flagitious magistrate, who determined at all hazards to secure her as his prey. After many fruitless attempts to corrupt the fidelity of those domestics to whom Virginius had left the charge of his daughter, (and she had lost her mother,) Appius devised a scheme which he thought could not fail to put Virginia entirely within his power. He employed Marcus

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Claudius, one of his dependents, an infamous and shameless man, to claim the young woman as his own property. Marcus pretended that she was the daughter of one of his female slaves, who had sold her when an infant to the wife of Virginius, who had no children. He therefore pretended to reclaim what was his own, and attempted by force to carry her home to his house. The people interposed with great earnestness to protect the young woman; and Marcus, declaring that he meant nothing but what was just and lawful, brought his claim before the tribunal of the decemvir. Numitorius, the uncle of Virginia, represented that her father, the guardian and protector of his child, was at this time absent, and in arms for the defence of his country. He asked a delay only of two days, in order to send for him from the camp, and demanded, in the mean time, that, as her nearest relation, the damsel should be committed to his care. The decemvir, with the show of much candour, allowed that there was great equity in the request of sending for Virginius, which he therefore immediately granted, but urged at the same time that this delay ought not to be prejudicial to the right of a master who claimed his slave. He therefore decreed that Marcus should take the young woman to his house, on giving security to produce her upon the return of her father. The flagrant injustice of this decree excited a cry of universal indignation. Marcus, advancing to lay hold of Virginia, was repulsed by the people, and particularly by Icilius, her intended husband, who, being apprised of the affair, had flown in rage and distraction to the forum. The tumult became so

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violent, that Appius, alarmed for his own safety, thought proper to suspend the execution of his decree, and to allow the young woman to remain under the protection of her friends till the arrival of her father. He despatched, in the mean time, a messenger to the army, desiring that his colleagues would on no account permit Virginius to quit the camp. But this unfortunate man, whom his friends had found means to inform of the situation of his child, was already on his way. He got to Rome without hindrance, and, to the confusion of the decemvir, appeared next day in the forum, supporting in his arms his daughter drowned in tears. An immense crowd attended; and all awaited the issue of this interesting question, their breasts alternately agitated with fear, with compassion, and indignation.

Appius, determined to prosecute his purpose, had ordered the troops to surround the forum. He now called on Marcus to make his demand, and to produce the proofs of his claim. To these Virginius was at no loss to give the most satisfying answers, which fully exposed the villainy of the imposture. Appius was not to be thus foiled. With the most unparalleled effrontery, he stood forth as a witness as well as a judge; declaring that it was consistent with his own knowledge that the plea of Marcus was true. He therefore gave his final sentence, that the slave should be delivered up to her lawful master, and ordered his officers to enforce, without delay, the execution of his decree. The soldiers were removing the crowd, and Marcus, together with the lictors, was advancing to seize

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Virginia, who clung for protection around the neck of her father. "There is," said he, "but one way, my dear child, to save thy honour and preserve thy liberty." Then seizing a knife from the stall of a butcher—"Thus," said he, striking her to the heart, "thus, I send thee to thy forefathers unpolluted and a free woman." Then turning to the tribunal of Appius, "Thou monster!" cried he, "with this blood I devote thy head to the infernal gods!" Appius, in a transport of rage, called out to the lictors to seize Virginius; but he, rushing out from the forum, and making way for himself with the knife which he held in his hand, while the multitude favoured his escape, got safe without the city, and arrived in a few hours at the camp. Meantime Numitorius and Icilius exposed the bleeding body to the sight of the whole people, who, inflamed to the highest pitch of fury, would have torn Appius to pieces, had he not found means to escape amidst the tumult, and to conceal himself in the house of one of his friends.

Valerius and Horatius, two of the senators, men of consular dignity, and who had opposed the last creation of decemviri, now put themselves at the head of the people. They promised them the redress of all their wrongs, and the abolition of those hated magistrates; but urged that they should first wait the resolution of the army, which could not fail to coincide with their own.

The unfortunate Virginius had no sooner acquainted his fellow-soldiers of what had happened, than there was a general insurrection. Without regard to the orders of the decemvirs in the camp,

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the whole army, headed by their centurions, marched to Rome, and, retiring to the Aventine mount, chose ten leaders, with the title of military tribunes. They then declared their determined purpose of abolishing the decemvirate, and re-establishing the consular government, together with the tribunes of the people. The senate was assembled. The decemvirs thought proper voluntarily to resign their office. Valerius and Horatius were chosen consuls; and the popular magistrates, the tribunes, were elected with the same powers as formerly, which reinstated the people at once in all their rights and privileges.

Among the tribunes first chosen were Virginius, Icilius, and Numitorius. It may be believed that their vengeance against the infamous Appius was not long delayed. Virginius cited him before the people, at whose orders he was seized and thrown into prison, where, a few days after, he was found dead. It was suspected, says Dionysius, that he was privately strangled by order of the tribunes; but other authors, with more probability, affirm that he chose to escape a certain and ignominious fate by a voluntary death. His colleague Oppius, the chief abettor of his crimes, had the same catastrophe, and the rest underwent a voluntary banishment, while their goods were forfeited to the public use. Such is the history of the decemvirate, that inauspicious and short-lived magistracy, which was thus violently terminated in the third year after its institution *.

* An amusing comparison may be made of the talents of the two great historians of the Roman republic, Livy and Dionysius

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of Halicarnassus, in the accounts they have given of that celebrated event, the death of Virginia by the hand of her father, and its important consequences. In Livy, we have a concise, clear, and animated narrative, where no circumstance is superfluous, no observation strained or far-fetched, nor anything omitted which contributes to the effect of the picture. In Dionysius, we wade through a minute detail of facts, and a laborious legal discussion, resembling the report of a law-process, in which every argument is brought forward, and every reflection anticipated, that the mind can form upon the case. It is easy to judge which method of writing is best adapted to historical composition. Vide Liv. lib. iii. c. 31—59; and Dion. Hal., Ant. Rom., lib. xi.

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## CHAPTER VI.

Law against Intermarriage of Patricians and Plebeians repealed —Military Tribunes created—Creation of Censors—their high Powers of Office—A regular Pay assigned to the Army introduces a new Balance into the Constitution—Consequences of—Siege of Veii—Romans begin to extend their Conquests—Reflections on the State of the Republic at this Period—War with the Gauls—Its fabulous Aspect—New popular Laws—Institution of the Office of Prætor—of Quæstor—of Ædile—Licinian Law limiting Property in Land.

No sooner was tranquillity in some measure re-established in the city of Rome, than the consuls Valerius and Horatius, at the head of a large army, animated with the spirit of patriotism which the late events had strongly stimulated, marched against the enemy. The Volsci and Æqui sustained a complete defeat; but the senate, jealous, as is said, of the too great popularity of the successful generals, thought proper to refuse them the honours of a triumph. The consuls, indignant at this insult, applied to the people, who unanimously decreed them this reward of their services. Thus the senate most imprudently threw away its privileges; and every day gave some new accession of weight to the scale of the people.

Two powerful barriers which at this time subsisted between the patricians and plebeians were, the law which prevented the intermarriage of

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these orders, and another ordinance which excluded the plebeians from the consulate and higher offices of the state. It was only necessary to remove these two obstructions, to bring the separate ranks to a perfect equality in every substantial privilege of Roman citizens; and the plebeians were determined to leave no means untried for the accomplishment of this end.

On the occasion of a new war, the ordinary device was practised of refusing to enter the rolls. In this purpose the people were obstinate; and the tribunes proposed, as the only expedient to bring them to compliance, that the law against intermarriage should be repealed; a measure which, they urged, would be equally advantageous for both parties, as it would tend to an union of their interests, and put an end to those perpetual jealousies and contentions which were so ruinous to the republic.

There were three different modes by which marriage could be contracted among the Romans. The marriages of the patricians were celebrated in the presence of ten witnesses, and with a variety of religious ceremonies peculiar to their order. The plebeians married after two different forms: the one was by a species of sale, *emptio venditio;* and the other by the simple cohabitation of the parties for a year, which by law constituted a marriage. Religion, therefore, made a barrier between the patricians and plebeians in this article; and this necessarily constituted the principal objection against the repeal of the law. The senate, however, saw the necessity of some concessions; and they judged that,

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by granting this request, they would put a stop to any further claims, at least for the present. But they were mistaken. The spirit of encroachment is never allayed by concession. This law was no sooner repealed than the people, with the same obstinacy, refused to enrol themselves till a second law was passed, admitting them to the capacity of holding all the offices of the republic.

No measure could be more galling than this to the pride of the patricians; but the necessity was extreme, as the enemy was at the gates of Rome. The senate sought a palliative to content both parties. It was determined to suspend for a time the office of the consuls, and to create in their place six military tribunes, with a similar extent of power, three of whom should be patricians and three plebeians. This proposal was heartily embraced by the people, who, provided they were admitted to the chief dignity of the state, did not value under what title it was; and the senators, on the other hand, flattered themselves that, having preserved the consulship inviolate, they would soon be able to restore that magistracy. While they were thus soothing themselves with shadowy distinctions, it was very evident that they were daily losing substantial power.

It was customary for those who were candidates for any magistracy to appear in the *Comitia*, clad in white apparel. The plebeians, who aspired to the military tribunate, appeared accordingly in that dress; but as the votes were called by centuries, and the patricians had been at some pains to influence their dependents, it happened that not one of the plebeians was elected. Three months

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afterward, the military tribunes, as had been preconcerted, resigned their office on pretence of some irregularity in their election. A powerful canvass was now set on foot by the plebeians to make good their pretensions to the new magistracy; but differing in their choice of candidates, and finding it impossible to arrive at an unanimity of sentiment, they consented, rather than yield to each other, that the consulate should, in the mean time, be restored; and these jealousies being artfully kept alive by the patricians, it thus happened that there was no election of military tribunes for several years.

War and domestic dissensions had prevented the consuls from making the usual census or numeration of the people, for a great many years; so that much confusion had arisen in the levying of the taxes, from ignorance of the exact number of the citizens, and the proportion of burdens to be levied from individuals. To remedy this evil, the consuls being now usually too much occupied to make the census regularly every five years, the senate created two new magistrates under the title of *censors;* an office which became afterwards of the highest respectability, and was given only to persons of consular dignity.

The most important privilege of the censors, and which, in fact, rendered their authority formidable to all ranks in the state, was the right they possessed of inspecting the morals, and examining into the conduct of all the citizens. It was in virtue of this high prerogative that, as Livy remarks, they kept in dependence both the senate and people. They possessed a constitutional

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power of degrading such as had manifested any irregularity of conduct, and depriving them of the rank and office which they held in the state. It was not an authority which extended to the punishment of those ordinary crimes and delicts which fall under the penal laws of a state. But there are offences which, in point of example, are worse than crimes, and more pernicious in their consequences. It is not the breach of express laws that can ever be of general bad effect, or tend to the destruction of a government; but it is that silent and unpunishable corruption of manners, which, undermining private and public virtue, weakens and destroys those springs to which the best ordered constitution owes its support. The counteracting this latent principle of decay was the most useful part of the office of the censors. If any citizen had imprudently contracted large debts; if he had consumed his fortune in extravagance, or in living beyond his income; if he had been negligent in the cultivation of his lands; nay, if, being in good circumstances and able to maintain a family, he had declined, without just cause, to marry,—all these offences attracted the notice of the censors, who had various modes of inflicting a penalty. The most usual, and not the least impressive, was a public denunciation of the offender as an object of disapprobation—*ignominiâ notabant.* It did not amount to a mark of infamy; but punished solely by inflicting the shame of a public reprimand. A penalty, however, of this kind is not fitted to operate on all dispositions, and accordingly the censors had it in their power to employ means more generally effectual. They



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could degrade a senator from his dignity, and strike his name out of the roll. They could deprive a knight of his rank, by taking from him the horse which was maintained for him at the public expense, and was the essential mark of his station. A citizen might be punished by degrading him from his tribe to an inferior one, or doubling his proportion of the public taxes. These, being arbitrary powers, might have been greatly abused; but, on the other hand, it is to be observed, that no decree of the censors was unalterable; it might be suspended, or altogether taken off by a sentence of the ordinary judges, or by a decree of the censors of the succeeding *Lustrum*. Cicero tells us, that Caius Geta, who had been degraded from his rank of senator by the censors, was reinstated in his dignity by their successors, and even made a censor himself; and Livy relates a similar instance of Valerius Messala.

The censorship, from these extensive powers, was accounted the most honourable office of the commonwealth. From the time of the second Punic war, the censors were always chosen from such persons as had held the consulship. After the termination of the republican government, the censorship was exercised by the emperors, and justly regarded as one of the most honourable and important branches of the imperial function.

The dissensions between the orders still continued, with little variety either in the grievances complained of on the part of the people, or in the modes of obtaining or rather compelling a redress of them. The last resource of the plebeians, and which they generally found effectual, was, on the

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emergency of a war, to refuse to enter the rolls until the senate granted their demands. The latter body now bethought itself of an expedient which it is rather surprising they had not sooner adopted: this was to purchase the service of the army by giving a regular pay to the troops. Hitherto, in all the military enterprises, the citizens enrolled served upon their own charges. It was a tax incumbent on every Roman to support himself during war, which being alike a burden on every free citizen, was not regarded as a grievance, but as the reasonable price which he paid for his liberty and security. Yet this circumstance necessarily limited the duration of their warlike operations to a very short period: for when the army was embodied, the lands of the poorer citizens, who had no slaves, were entirely neglected. This policy, therefore, was not only ruinous to the people, but repressed all enlargement of the Roman territory, and was an insuperable bar to extensive and permanent conquests.

The senate now resolved to adopt a new system. They ordained that, in future, the foot soldiers should have a regular pay from the public treasury, to defray which burden a tax should be imposed on all the members of the commonwealth in proportion to their means. The people, who did not penetrate the motive of this important measure, but looked only to the immediate advantage it promised in relieving them from what they had always felt a very heavy burden, were fully satisfied with the new arrangement. The tribunes, however, either looking further into consequences, or perhaps jealous of any measure which, promising



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an harmonious agreement between the orders, diminished their own consequence as magistrates, were at much pains to persuade the people that the bounty of the patricians was always to be suspected, and sought by every means to frustrate the new project. They failed, however, of their purpose. The manifest advantage of the measure prevailed over all opposition. The patricians set the example and began the contribution, fairly paying their contingents according to the value of their estates. The money was seen passing to the treasury in loaded waggons, and the poorer citizens, pleased with the sight, paid their shares with the utmost alacrity, anticipating the return of their money with high profit into their own pockets *.

From this period we shall see the Roman system of war assume a new appearance. The senate henceforward always found soldiers at command: the state was consequently enabled to engage in extensive enterprises, and support long campaigns: every success was more signal and important, because it was maintained and prosecuted; and every conquest was turned to permanent advantage. A most material consequence likewise arose to the constitution of the republic; the senate, by command over the troops, obtained a favourable balance to its otherwise decreasing authority.

One of the first measures which owed its success to this change in the Roman art of war was the siege of Veii, a city at that time equal in extent

* We are not informed by any of the ancient writers what pay was allotted to the Roman soldiers at this period; but in the time of Polybius, that is, at the era of the second Punic war, each foot soldier was allowed two *oboli* a day,—a centurion double that pay.

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and population to Rome, and a formidable rival to her power and ascendency among the states of Italy. A formal siege was a new attempt to the Romans, who had hitherto limited their enterprises to small towns, which they could take by surprise or storm. In their ancient mode of attacking towns, their most refined manœuvre was the *corona*, which was performed by surrounding the place and attacking it at once on every quarter. A city capable of resisting this assault was deemed impregnable. The Romans, who were now in a capacity to form lengthened enterprises, were, from that circumstance, a great overmatch for any of the surrounding states, as well as from the improvement we must suppose the art of war underwent from its now becoming a profession instead of an occasional employment. The dominion of Rome had been hitherto confined to the territory of a few miles around the city: we shall now see how rapid was the extension of her bounds, and the strength acquired by her conquests.

The siege of Veii was prolonged for ten years. An army wintering on the field was a thing till then quite unexampled; and during the whole time of this siege, the tribunes, who suffered no occasion to pass unimproved that promised to excite discord and domestic faction, loudly complained that this intolerable war was nothing else than a conspiracy against liberty; a design to weaken the party of the plebeians, by depriving them of the suffrages of those who were with the army, while the latter, as they hinted, were to be inhumanly sacrificed in order to give the patricians the entire command of the commonwealth. Having

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full conviction of these designs, the patriotic tribunes felt it their duty to oppose the levying the tax for furnishing the military pay. The army of course soon began to mutiny; and the consequence must have been the abandonment and defeat of the enterprise, had not the patricians found means to soothe them by electing one of their number to the military tribunate. This well-timed sacrifice of a little power taken from the scale of the higher order, quieted the spirit of the opposition, and the campaign was not frustrated of its supplies.

The siege of Veii proceeded, as we have said, very slowly; and, during its continuance, Rome was afflicted both by real and by imaginary calamities. A dreadful pestilence broke out; and the books of the Sibyls were consulted, which declared that the only remedy was a *Lectisternium*, a ceremony now performed for the first time. An invitation was given to the chief gods of the Roman state, to partake of a splendid festival prepared for them with uncommon expense. The statues of Jupiter, Apollo, Latona, Diana, Hercules, Mercury, and Neptune, were laid upon three magnificent beds, and for eight days the most sumptuous banquets were presented to these images, which of course were eaten by their priests and partly distributed to the populace. During that time, the gates of the city were open to all strangers; the courts of law were shut, and all litigation suspended; the prisoners were set at liberty, and every citizen kept open tables for all comers. Although, perhaps, this ceremony might owe its origin to superstition alone, it is not impossible that it might actually

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have been attended with salutary effects. It is well known that in epidemic and contagious diseases, nothing so much predisposes to infection as fear and apprehension. A jubilee of this kind, by exhilarating the spirits of the people, and banishing for a while care and anxiety, might naturally contribute to check the diffusion, and abate the violence of the contagion.

Veii was still blockaded; and as this enterprise greatly engrossed the minds of the public, every thing in that age of superstition was construed into a good or a bad omen. The lake of Alba increased prodigiously, and deputies were sent to inquire what the gods meant by that extraordinary phenomenon. The deputies brought back word that the conquest of Veii depended on draining the lake, and that particular care should be taken to convey the waters to the sea; (a most wise and salutary advice, in a season of contagious disease). The work was immediately begun; and that fine canal was cut, which subsists at this day, and conveys the waters of the lake Albano, by *Castel-Gondolfo*, to the sea. This was likewise an instance in which the faith of the people in the veracity of the prediction might have greatly aided its accomplishment. In the present case, however, it is probable that the valour of the besieged Veientes had powerful incitements, and perhaps from a similar improvement of popular prejudices to wise purposes; for Veii continued for a long period of time to baffle every effort of the Roman power. At length, in the tenth year of the siege, Marcus Furius Camillus was chosen dictator, an intrepid and skilful general, who had the honour

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of finishing this obstinate war, by the taking of the city in the 358th year of Rome, and 391 B. C.

The Romans had but very few laws of a political nature, or such as regulated the form of their government, or defined the constitutional powers and rights of the distinct orders of the state. It is, therefore, no matter of surprise, to find that perpetual contest betwixt those orders, giving rise to all that series of petty revolutions, which form almost entirely the history of the Roman republic for the period of above four centuries. During the regal government, the people had, in reality, more genuine liberty, than for some time after its abolition, while the constitution was almost purely aristocratical; for the kings, though they sought to humble the aspiring patricians, were extremely moderate towards the plebeians, who were thus brought very near to a level with the superior order. But under the aristocracy which followed the expulsion of the king, the patricians, who were the governors of the state, made it their principal object to increase and confirm their power, by reducing the plebeians to absolute submission and dependence. Hence those oppressive measures, which at length produced that stubborn opposition and resistance on the part of the people, which nothing could allay but the concession of creating magistrates from their own order, and giving them a constitutional weight and legal influence in the state. This important step being once surmounted, every subsequent struggle of parties added fresh weight to the popular scale; and there were now two separate bodies in the republic, each eagerly contending for its sovereignty, and

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studious of every method of humbling and abasing the other.

It cannot be said that the Romans were at this time a free people, for neither of the orders was really so. The patricians were not free, for they were amenable to the popular assemblies; a court where the judges were their jealous rivals and natural enemies. Nor could the plebeians be said to enjoy liberty, for they neither enjoyed the security of property nor of person, from the extreme rigour of the laws regarding debtors, in which situation the great mass of the people stood with respect to the richer citizens. Even in the popular assemblies, when the *comitia* were called in the order of the centuries, the people met only to witness the enactment of laws, which commonly struck against their own liberties; not to mention the right of the senate at any time to nominate a dictator, who had absolute authority in the state.

The plebeians, however, under all these disadvantages, were, as we have seen, advancing, step by step, to an equality with the patricians in the enjoyment of all the offices of the commonwealth, which they now very soon obtained. It is easy to discern that this single circumstance—the election of the chief magistrates in the comitia held by centuries—formed now the only obstacle to an equality of power between the orders. It may, perhaps, be supposed, that at this period of the commonwealth, when many of the plebeians had acquired considerable wealth, and consequently came to be arranged in the first or higher classes, the number of these rich plebeians would frequently turn the balance, even in the *comitia*

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*centuriata*, in favour of their own order; and so in fact it did sometimes happen; but this was not usual: for as the censors had the power of arrangement, they commonly took care that the first classes, though composed in part of wealthy plebeians, should have in them, at least, a considerable majority of patricians, which secured the vote of the whole class.

In order to overcome this manifest disadvantage to their order, the popular magistrates might have followed either of the two different plans. The one, the most difficult of accomplishment, was the procuring the election of the higher magistrates to be made in the *comitia tributa;* the other, in case they failed in that attempt, was to bring about the same order of voting in the *comitia centuriata*, or to make the lot determine which class should take the lead in giving their suffrage. And it has been supposed that they did effect something of this nature; for Livy speaks of the *prerogative class* in the election of the higher magistrates, which was the term used to signify that class in the *comitia tributa*, on which the lot fell to vote first. Livy, however, in this expression, might mean nothing more than to signify that class which, in point of *rank*, was entitled to vote first; so that no conclusive argument can be founded on this indefinite expression he has used.

The siege and conquest of Veii was a presage of the future grandeur of the Roman state. It was impossible for the small, detached, and independent states of Italy to withstand a nation always in arms, whose high ambition and unremitting perseverance were equal to the projecting

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and accomplishing of any enterprise in the way of conquest. It might naturally be supposed, that those smaller states, aware of the great advantage which Rome had gained by her system of professionary soldiers, would either imitate her in adopting the same plan, or at least take precaution, by an extensive system of offensive and defensive alliance between themselves, to guard against this formidable and encroaching power; but it does not appear that either of these measures was adopted; and the consequence was, that signal inferiority which was the cause of their progressive, and at length total subjugation to the Roman arms.

The conquest of Veii was succeeded by a war with the Gauls. This formidable people—alone a cause of serious alarm to the Roman power—was a branch of the great ancient nation of the *Celtæ**. They are said to have first entered Italy in the reign of Tarquinius Priscus. They opened to themselves a passage through the Alps, made four different irruptions, and settled themselves in the northern part of the Peninsula, between the Alps and Apennines, from which they had expelled the Etruscans, and built for themselves several cities. They had been settled in this country

* The more ancient Greek writers bestow the name of *Celtæ* indifferently on the Gauls and Germans. Others confine that appellation to the natives of Gaul Proper; while some authors include under it the Spaniards, countenanced in that notion by the term *Celtiberians*. The name Celtæ, however, in the Roman writers, seems to be applied exclusively to the inhabitants of Gallia, or that country of which Cæsar, in the beginning of his Commentaries, has accurately described the limits.

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about 200 years, when, under the command of Brennus, (A. U. C. 362,) they laid siege to Clusium. The Etruscans solicited the aid of the Romans, who sent some deputies in order to mediate a reconciliation; but these deputies, being provoked by the pride of the barbarians, joined themselves to the Etrurian army, and made an attack on the Gauls; a breach of the law of nations, for which Brennus immediately sent to Rome to demand satisfaction. The Romans were not inclined to grant it; but imprudently justified, and even conferred honour on, the offending delegates. The consequence was, that Brennus, raising the siege of Clusium, marched directly to Rome.

There is nothing which tends more to encourage doubts regarding the authenticity of the Roman history at this period, than the circumstances which their writers have recorded of this war with the Gauls. Three years before its commencement the Roman citizens capable of bearing arms amounted, according to the numeration of the censors, to above 150,000 men. After the first engagement with the Gauls, in which a Roman army amounting to 40,000 was defeated, we find Rome so absolutely defenceless, that the barbarians enter the city without opposition, and massacre the senators in cold blood, who are sitting patiently waiting for death at the doors of their houses. The Gauls then set fire to the city, which they burn to the ground. About a thousand inhabitants shut themselves up in the Capitol, which still holds out against the enemy; but this fortress would have been surprised and taken by assault in

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the night, had not some geese, more wakeful than the sentinels, alarmed the garrison by their screaming, and thus defeated the enemy's escalade. The garrison, however, is soon reduced to extremity from want of provisions, and a capitulation ensues, by which the Romans agreed to purchase a peace for a certain price in solid gold, which the Gauls are weighing out with false weights, when Camillus, with a large army, (how assembled we are left to guess,) most seasonably comes to the relief of his country, and, engaging the enemy, obtains so complete a victory, that in one day's time there is not a single Gaul remaining within the territory of Rome. Is it not surprising that the sagacious Livy should gravely relate, as a piece of authentic history, such facts as are utterly irreconcilable to common probability?

The destruction of Rome by the Gauls is said to have given rise to a scheme which was eagerly promoted by the tribunes of the people, the removal of the seat of government to Veii. Camillus opposed the measure in an animated oration, which is recorded, or rather composed, by Livy*. But the orator's eloquence would probably have failed of its effect, had not popular superstition contributed to aid his counsels. A centurion, mustering his men in the forum, called out to one of the standard-bearers, "Here fix your banners; here we shall do best to remain†." The omen was received by a general acclamation of the people, and all

* Liv. v. 51, &c.

† Signifer, statue signum:—hic manebimus optimè. Liv. v. 55.

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design of abandoning the city was instantly laid aside.

Rome, desolated and burnt to the ground, seems very speedily to have recovered from her misfortunes; for we find, in a very few years, a renewal of the same intestine disorders, the same jealousies and obstinate contention for power between the patricians and plebeians, which in fact for about two centuries form all that is interesting in the history of the Roman Commonwealth.

It is somewhat extraordinary that most of the revolutions of the Roman state should have owed their origin to women. To a woman Rome owed the abolition of the regal dignity and the establishment of the republic. To a woman she owed her delivery from the tyranny of the decemviri, and the restoration of the consular government; and to a woman, we shall now see, she owed that change of the constitution by which the plebeians became capable of holding the highest offices of the commonwealth.

Marcus Fabius Ambustus had given one of his daughters in marriage to Licinius Stolo, a plebeian, and the other to Servius Sulpitius, a patrician, and at that time one of the military tribunes. One day, when the wife of the plebeian was at her sister's house, the lictor who walked before Sulpitius, on his return from the senate, knocked loudly at the door with the staff of the fasces, to give notice that the magistrate was coming in. This noise, to which the wife of Licinius was not accustomed, threw her into a panic. Her sister laughed at her alarm, and threw out a malicious jest on

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the inequality of their conditions. A very small matter, says Livy, is sufficient to disturb the quiet of a woman's mind. The younger Fabia took this affront most seriously to heart. She complained to her father, who, to comfort her, promised that he would do his utmost endeavour that her husband should have his lictor as well as her elder sister's. This trifling circumstance is said to have been the cause of the admission of the plebeian order to the consular dignity.

Fabius concerted his plan with his son-in-law Licinius, and with Lucius Sextius, a young, enterprising plebeian. At the next election for the tribunes of the people, Licinius and Sextius had interest to be nominated to that office. One of their first measures was the proposal of three new laws. The first was in favour of debtors, and enacted that there should be an abatement of the principal sums due in proportion to the interest that had been paid on them. The second enacted that no Roman citizen should possess more than five hundred acres of land: and by the third it was proposed to be decreed that the military tribunate should henceforward be abolished, and two consuls elected, the one from the order of the patricians, the other from that of the plebeians.

The patricians, it may be believed, gave the strongest opposition to all these laws. They secured to their interest the colleagues of Sextius and Licinius, and by their *veto* the propositions were thrown out. Sextius, however, was not discouraged, but boldly threatened that he would make the higher order sensible of the power of his *veto* in return. He and his colleague Licinius

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had the address to be continued in office for five successive years, during all which time they obstinately opposed the election both of military tribunes and of consuls: so that in that period there were no other magistrates than the tribunes of the people and the ædiles.

Amidst these disorders, a war broke out with the inhabitants of Velitræ, and soon after with the Gauls. The senate had no other resource but to create a dictator; but that office, from being too frequent, had lost much of its respect and its terrors. Camillus, at the age of eighty, was, for the fifth time, appointed dictator: he was successful in defeating the enemy, but he could not repress the ambitious schemes of the tribunes. These magistrates at length, by inflexible perseverance, carried their point. They obtained a decree of the people that the military tribunal should be abolished, and that henceforth one of the consuls should be chosen from the order of the plebeians; and this important decree the senate was forced to confirm. Camillus proposed that there should be a new magistrate created from the patrician order, for the administration of justice; as the consuls, in their function of generals of the republic, had too much occupation to attend to their judicial duties. The people extremely gratified by the great accession of power and privilege to their order, consented cheerfully to the proposal; and a new magistrate was created with the title of *Prætor*, an officer often mentioned in the Roman laws, and of very high dignity. He was decorated with the robe called the *prætexta*, bordered with purple; he had the *curŭle*, or ivory chair of state,

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and he was attended by a guard of six lictors. As the prætorship was formed by conferring on a separate magistrate what had formerly been a branch of the consular office, the patricians, who got this new office annexed to their order, had thus a sort of compensation for the important concession they had made to the people. At first only one magistrate was created with the title of prætor; but afterwards the vast increase of civil causes occasioned the creation of many. In the time of Sylla there were *eight* prætors. Julius Cæsar increased the number to ten, and afterwards to sixteen; and the second triumvirate created no less than sixty-four prætors. After that time, we meet sometimes with twelve, and sometimes sixteen or eighteen prætors; but in the decline of the empire we commonly find no more than three. When the number of the prætors was thus increased, and the *quæstiones* or trials for crimes were made perpetual, instead of being committed to officers chosen for the occasion, there was one prætor distinguished by the epithet of *urbanus*, who had the cognizance of civil suits, and the others were special judges in particular crimes or offences. The latter were therefore sometimes called *quæsitores, quia quærebant de crimine;* the function of the former was simply *jus dicere*, or to judge in civil questions between the citizens. the era of the creation of this new magistracy, and of the admission of the plebeian order to the consulate, was the 386th year from the foundation of Rome. The new ædiles were at the same time created from the patrician order, with the epithet of *curules* or *majores;* and their office was to take



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care of the temples, and to preside at the public games and spectacles.

The ambition of the principal plebeians was now satisfied, and the patricians had in return some small gratification by these new offices. It remained now only that the populace should likewise be gratified, and this was done by the Licinian law, which enacted that no Roman citizen should possess above five hundred acres of land, and that the surplus should be distributed at a settled and low rate of price among the poorest of the people. We must conclude that the territory of the republic was at this time very greatly enlarged, when such a regulation was either necessary or practicable.

It might have been expected that these new arrangements would have been attended, at least for some time, with public tranquillity; but this was a situation with the popular magistrates could not endure, for the authority and credit of the tribunes kept pace with the public disorders. These magistrates were at infinite pains to convince the people that, by consenting to the creation of the new offices of Prætor and Ædile, they had lost more power than they had gained by the admission of their order to the consulate. They therefore urged that it would be mean and pusillanimous to stop short in their pretensions till they had obtained an equal right with the patricians to all the dignities of the state, sacerdotal as well as civil.

The dissensions were therefore renewed with the same ardour as ever. A pestilence gave for some time a miserable interval of tranquillity.

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The priests, to put a stop to this calamity, which threatened to depopulate the city, tried every expedient which policy or superstition could devise. A *Lectisternium* was celebrated, and scenic representations were for the first time introduced at Rome, borrowed, it is said, from Etruria. But all was to no purpose. The plague, however, is recorded to have yielded at last to the ceremony of driving a nail into the temple of Jupiter. This, a French writer* remarks, was curing one contagious disease by another yet more contagious; meaning, no doubt, that the encouragement of superstition is worse than the pestilence—a sentiment which is not happily applied to the case of a rude people, whose superstitious prejudices are the safeguard of their morals, and will be cherished by a wise legislator as an engine of good policy.

The war still continued: the Gauls were ever making new attempts, and almost constantly with bad success. It was found expedient, however, very frequently to resort to the creation of a dictator; and such was the ascendency which the plebeians had now obtained, that even this supreme and despotic magistrate was sometimes chosen from their order. It might have been foreseen that the privilege of being elected to the consulate necessarily led to this—for it was the province of the *consuls* to name the *dictator*. The plebeians had by this time likewise obtained the curule ædileship; they had now nothing more to aspire to than the censorship, the prætorship, and the priesthood. The senate, with great weakness

* Condillac.

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but at the same time with great obstinacy, were always ready to renew their attempts at every new election to exclude the plebeians. They sometimes succeeded, but they always lost more by this opposition than they gained. They prevailed at one election that both consuls should be chosen from their order; but they could not prevent their rivals from fully indemnifying themselves by the election of a plebeian censor.

END OF VOL. II.

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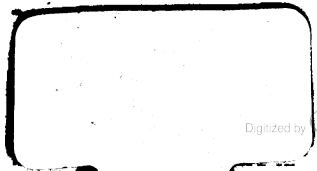
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